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•

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REVIEWS

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VOLUME EIGHT

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL. *Unashamed to Beg.* 3

HERBERT READ. *Chains of Freedom* (I). 4

ALEX COMFORT. *Social Aspects of Censorship and Pornography.* 11

JEAN TRIEUX. *French Writing To-day.* 15

DEREK STANFORD. *Rights of the Imagination.* 21

POEMS by RICHARD EBERHART, LAWRENCE DURRELL, PETER WELLS, JAMES LAUGHLIN, BRIAN A. ROWLEY, DENISE LEVERTOV, GEORGE SIMS, HARRY ROSKOLENKO.
20, 27-33, 39 & 53

EDWARD RAWSTRON. *Science and the Novel.* 34

ROY FULLER. *Arnold's Poetic Object.* 40

MARY HARRIS. *The Warehouse.* 49

PAUL MATTICK. *Stalin, Trotsky and Lenin* (I). 54

BOOK REVIEWS by JULIAN SYMONS, LOUIS ADEANE, and DEREK STANFORD 58

REPRODUCTIONS OF PAINTINGS by PICASSO, DOMINGUEZ, FERNANDEZ, MANUEL. 48

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Editorial

Unashamed to Beg!

This is *NOW's* first begging editorial. Like most other literary magazines, we are finding that the steady increase in the cost of printing makes it impossible for us to meet the production bills *and* pay our contributors even a nominal fee for their work, without incurring a considerable loss. Unlike the remaining reviews of equal standing, *NOW* is sponsored neither by a firm of publishers nor by a wealthy "backer". It is wholly independent, and uncomfortably so, since it has no reserves of funds but the good will of its readers.

In order to remove this perpetual insecurity, we are making two suggestions to our readers of how they can help *NOW*.

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Secondly, in order to provide a secure backing for the future, we need a reserve in the bank on which we can draw in case of emergency. We are therefore initiating a Guarantee Fund of £200. This is a comparatively small amount, shared among our readers, but it will make all the difference to *NOW's* security. Therefore, if you think *NOW* is worth it, send what you can as a contribution to our Guarantee Fund. Already we have received promises from some of our friends of cash totalling £30. There remains £170 to be made up.

★

Owing to the delay caused by the power cut, our February-March number appeared a month late. In order to adjust the dates, we have decided to alter that of the present issue to May-June. Subscriptions will be adjusted accordingly, so that the correct number of copies is sent.

Herbert Read

Chains of Freedom (1)

1. Under this title I intend to gather from time to time stray notes—ideas, criticisms, quotations—any material which might serve as prolegomena to a philosophy of freedom. For many years now I have let such thoughts slip by unrecorded, and though they have served *my* purpose, leaving my mind richer, my convictions stronger, they are like the steps of a ladder which I have kicked away. People may well wonder how I got myself into the isolated niche which is inscribed Anarchism.

2. I shall not proceed on any plan. The form will be that of a commonplace book, a *cahier,* and though I shall not date my entries, they will follow more or less the course of my reading, or will be inspired by passing events. But before I set out on my casual path, there are a few definitions or axioms which I ought perhaps to write down, as a guide to those who will follow me, as a warning to those who might be misguided by me. There is the word *freedom* itself, so often and so glibly used by every interested person or party. The "freedom" of the press, the "freedom" of association, the "freedom" of trade—all such uses of the word seem to me wrong, for freedom is an abstract concept, a philosophical word. What these people mean by their "freedoms" is really a negative condition—the absence of control, the liberty of unlicensed conduct (it is significant that a complete ambiguity or equivocation has also overtaken the word "licence"). Freedom, in this sense, always implies *freedom* from—freedom from some kind of control. But freedom in the sense I shall use the word is a positive condition—specifically, freedom to create, freedom to become what *is*. The word implies an obligation. Freedom is not a state of rest, of least resistance. It is a state of action, of projection, of self-realisation. I shall discuss sometime during the course of these notes whether freedom is essentially personal, egoistic, individualistic; or whether it implies a social setting. We speak of a "free" wheel on a bicycle, but its freedom has no sense except in relation to the complex function of the machine as a whole, and its use by a human being.

3. A man *is* free: he is *given* his liberty.

Freedom is a personal attribute; liberty is a civil right. This distinction is nicely illustrated in the following usages: The liberty of a city is a definite area of ground within which the municipal authority extends. The *freedom* of a city is a *quality* (privilege) conferred on a person.

There are endless nuances of difference between these two words—freedom and liberty, and the fact that we have two words in English, and have developed different meanings for them, is of profound significance. He who does not feel a difference between them does not really possess freedom, however much he may be at liberty.

And what of nations that do not possess two words to distinguish these nuances? At present a long obscure discussion is taking place in France on the meaning of *liberté*. The existentialists have invented "a new doctrine of liberty". I, as an Englishman, see nothing new in it: Sartre and his disciples are merely trying to distinguish a state of being which we would call freedom: but since the French have only one word, *"liberté"*, it has to be given a special definition, a further nuance. The French pride themselves on the "clarté" of their language, but their philosophers and psychologists are always getting into difficulties simply because they lack alternative words to distinguish nearly related concepts. This word-poverty, which has always been evident in their poetry afflicts their philosophy with similar limitations. How a Pascal and a Bergson struggle against these limitations!

(Admittedly, both the poetry and the philosophy gain something from the struggle: not *clarté*, but *netteté*; and the ingenuity that is required forces the magnificent imagery of Pascal and Bergson. Since Plato, these two are the most poetical of all philosophers.)

4. The Germans have *Freiheit*, but no word corresponding to liberty. But they are aware of the distinction and have to some extent acclimatized the French *liberté*. It is significant, again, that they have a native word for the personal attribute, but none for the civil right. Hitler often claimed that he had not interfered with the "freedom" of the people; he did not mean that he had no intention of taking away their liberty.*

5. Liberty is concrete: existential.

Freedom is abstract—a state of being: essential.

Sartre's doctrine of liberty—"une liberté qui n'est limité que par elle-même": in one word—*freedom*. (Significance of the abstract suffix: Free*dom*, Frei*heit*, etc.) Existentialist philosophy, which is of German origin, translates with such confusion into French because the French cannot manipulate abstract affixes and suffixes with the prodigious ease of a Husserl or Heidegger.

6. "Liberty is not a value but the ground of value."—W. H. Auden. Introduction to Henry James's *American Scene* (N.Y., Scribner, 1946). A perfect statement: but *freedom* is a value, and indeed, the value of all values.

7. The problem of "free" will, which now exercises the Existentialists as much as it once did the Scholastics and the Calvinists, is again complicated for the French by their poverty of terms. Man, says Sartre, is a product of his free will; he is what he is in virtue

*A passage from the recent translation of Martin Buber's *Between Man and Man*† reveals the inadequacy of the one word *Freiheit* in German. "It is the nature of freedom to provide the place, but not the foundation as well, on which true life is raised. That is true both of inner "moral" freedom and of outer freedom (which consists in not being hindered or limited). As the higher freedom, the soul's freedom of decision, signifies perhaps our highest moments but not a fraction of our substance, so the lower freedom, the freedom of development, signifies our capacity for growth but by no means our growth itself."†

This need to distinguish between a higher and a lower freedom, between a moral and an outer freedom, is expressed by our separate words, freedom and liberty.

†Trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith. London (Kegan Paul), 1947.

of "un libre choix". We would say, man is free to become what he is, and that does not seem a complicated statement. But if we were compelled to say that man is "at liberty" to become what he is, however we play with the word "liberty", we are always compelled to use a phrase which suggests a relationship, either between man and man, or between man and society. A concrete situation is implied. But no such "concretisation" arises from the use of the word "free". If a man is "free", he is free both existentially and essentially. "Existence precedes essence", Sartre's famous slogan, does not make sense in the estate of freedom: in freedom existence is essence, essence existence.

Heidegger writes: "Das Wesen de Wahrheit ist die Freiheit". The French translate: "L'essence de la verité est la liberté". I would say: "The essence of truth is freedom", not liberty.

I read in a French article: "Si je suis libre de renoncer à ma liberté, il faut bien qu'il y ait un cas au moins où cette liberté est effectivement exercée", and instinctively I begin to translate: If I am *free* to renounce my liberty, it would seem that there is one case at least where this . . . (I hesitate) *freedom* is effectively exercised. But this makes nonsense of the French writer's point. Indeed, the whole article, "Remarques sur une nouvelle doctrine de la liberté", par Aimé Patri (Deucalion, No. 1, 1946) is full of pseudo-clarity which becomes ambiguity once we try to translate it into English.

8. Query: in the history of existentialism, where does Max Stirner come in? I have the impression that his name is never mentioned in the popular accounts of existentialism. Sartre may never have read him, but Husserl? The existentialists speak often of Nietzche's influence on Husserl, and Stirner is recognised as one of the precursors of Nietzche. But I suspect a more direct liaison. Stirner is the most existentialist of all past philosophers, and whole pages of *The Ego and His Own* read like anticipations of Sartre. Buber recognizes his place in the evolution of the existentialist philosophy.

9. A philosophy of *freedom*: a *doctrine* of liberty.

10. A final etymological note. *Free* is derived from DE *fréon*, to love (Sanskrit root, *pri* to love) and is therefore related to *friend*. Liberty is derived from the Latin legal phrase, used to describe emancipation from the *master-slave* bond. Query: connected with *libra*, scales? In any case, there is the implication all through its history, of a legalistic background. But obviously, in French, the word has acquired all the emotional overtones which we attach to the word freedom. Cf. Eluard's poem.

11. Acton's definition of *liberty* brings out its contractual basis:

> "By liberty I mean the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of authority and majorities, custom and opinion." "Liberty . . . is not a means to a higher political end . .. A generous spirit prefers that his country should be poor, and weak, and of no account, but free, rather than powerful, prosperous and enslaved. It is better to be the citizen of a humble commonwealth in the Alps than a subject of the superb autocracy that overshadows half of Asia and Europe."

12. Compare Tocqueville:

> "Liberty may be conceived, by those who enjoy it, under two different

forms: as the exercise of a universal right, or as the enjoyment of a privilege. In the middle ages, those who possessed any liberty of action, *viz.* the feudal aristocracy, figured to themselves their liberty under the latter type. They desired it, not because it was what all were entitled to, but because each considered himself as possessing, in his own person, a peculiar right to it. And thus has liberty almost always been understood in aristocratic societies, where conditions are very unequal, and where the human mind, having once contracted the thirst for privileges, ends by ranking among privileges all the good things of this world.

This notion of liberty as a personal right of the individual who so conceives it, or at most of the class to which he belongs, may subsist in a nation where general liberty does not exist. It even sometimes happens that, in a certain small number of persons, the love of liberty is all the stronger in proportion to the deficiency of the securities necessary for the liberties of all. The exception is the more precious in proportion as it is more rare.

This aristocratic notion of liberty produces, among those who have imbibed it, an exalted idea of their own individual value, and a passionate love of independence; it gives extraordinary energy and ardour to their pursuit of their own interests and passions. Entertained by individuals, it has often led them to the most extraordinary actions;—adopted by an entire people, it has created the most energetic nations that have ever existed.

The Romans believed that they alone of the human race were fitted to enjoy independence; and it was much less from nature than from Rome that they thought they derived their right to be free.

According to the modern, the democratic, and, we venture to say the only just notion of liberty, every man, being presumed to have received from nature the intelligence necessary for his own general guidance, is inherently entitled to be uncontrolled by his fellows in all that only concerns himself, and to regulate at his own will his own destiny.

From the moment when this notion of liberty has penetrated deeply into the minds of a people, and has solidly established itself there, absolute and arbitrary power is thenceforth but a usurpation, or an accident; for, if no one is under any moral obligation to submit to another, it follows that the sovereign will can rightfully emanate only from the union of the wills of the whole. From that time passive obedience loses its character of morality, and there is no longer a medium between the bold and manly virtues of the citizen and the base compliance of the slave.

In proportion as ranks become equalized, this notion of liberty tends naturally to prevail."

This distinction between aristocratic liberty as a privilege and democratic liberty as universal right remains within the realm of politics. Equality of wealth, the right to elect representatives, etc., all the devices of the democratic state, do not touch the problem of freedom. The most mentally enslaved people in the world to-day are the *uniform* citizens of a democratic republic like the United States of America. They have retained their liberty but lost their essential freedom. They speak proudly of the American *pattern* of behaviour. Eccentricity is bad taste. The matter is even worse in the U.S.S.R. where the concept of freedom, in our sense of the word, does not seem to exist. We assume too readily that concepts are universal, that "ideas" exist by some principle of spontaneous origin in every mind. But thirty years of "collective teaching" can eradicate an idea, destroy a concept. The Russians know the difference between a prison and a factory, between rations and luxuries: they have what they might call "freedom of choice". But freedom as a state of being, as a mental

climate—that is beyond their present comprehension.

One might compare the historical changes in the concept of freedom with the historical changes in the concept of love, as traced by Denis de Rougemont (in *Passion and Society*) and C. S. Lewis (in *The Allegory of Love*). It is not that a Platonist would have despised the passionate heterosexual love which began in Europe as a reaction to Christianity (which is de Rougemont's thesis): he would have been incapable of conceiving such an emotion, or even the idea of such an emotion; in the same way, the younger citizens of the U.S.S.R. seem incapable now of conceiving the notion of freedom.

13. The most profound understanding of the nature of freedom is found in the works of Martin Buber, the Jewish philosopher. But again, as in the writings of Heidegger and Sartre, it is extremely difficult to disentangle the ambiguities which proceed from the use of a single word—in Buber's case, the word freedom. I have already quoted (§4) a passage from Buber which shows that he is aware of an inherent difference of meaning. But when he goes on to distinguish between "freedom" and "compulsion", we seem to lose sight of the two meanings of freedom. There is a tendency, says Buber, to regard freedom (in the sense of liberty) as the opposite pole from compulsion. But "at the opposite pole from compulsion there stands, not freedom, but communion. Compulsion is a negative reality, communion is the positive reality; freedom is a possibility, possibility regained. At the opposite pole of being compelled by destiny or nature or men there does not stand being free of destiny or nature or men, but to commune and to covenant with them. To do this, it is true that one must first have become independent; but this independence is a foot-bridge, not a dwelling place. Freedom is the vibrating needle, the fruitful zero."

Is it likely that the distinction between freedom and liberty is retained by the reader of this passage? Buber uses three terms—compulsion, freedom, communion. If we use our fourth term, liberty, then the over-paradoxical element in Buber's statement disappears. If we are "under compulsion", we are not "at liberty" to "commune with one another". In these words, the statement becomes, not a paradox, but a platitude. But "to become free"—that, as Buber rightly insists, is something quite different: "Life lived in freedom is personal responsibility or it is a pathetic farce". In communion, we are responsible for one another and (though this is adding a gloss to Buber) the whole idea of justice arises from that personal responsibility.

Buber says: "I love freedom, but I do not believe in it", and he adds that we must not make freedom into a theorem or programme. But here clearly he is using freedom in our sense of liberty; and in that sense I can agree with him. But obviously Buber believes in moral freedom, in "the soul's freedom of decision", and has made freedom in that sense the main feature of his philosophy.

14. The social aspect of communion is community, and "the commune" is the social unit which preserves the freedom of the person. But here again Buber has made a distinction of the utmost importance for our philosophy—the distinction between "community" and

"collectivity":

> "Collectivity is not a binding but a bundling together: individuals packed together, armed and equipped in common, with only as much life from man to man as will inflame the marching step. But community, growing community (which is all we have known so far) is being no longer side by side but *with* one another of a multitude of persons . . . Community is where community happens. Collectivity is based on an organized atrophy of personal existence, community on its increase and confirmation in life lived towards one another. The modern zeal for collectivity is a flight from community's testing and consecration of the person, a flight from the vital dialogic, demanding the staking of the self, which is the heart of the world."

What a light this throws, not only on the development of collectivism in Russia but on the equally fatal development within many of the co-operative communities of the past. Why have so many of these communities failed? There is a general agreement that *the causes of failure were rarely economic.* Lack of planning, lack of experience in agriculture—these, as Infield points out in his historical review of co-operative communities,* contribute to the process of dissolution. But the main cause is psychological, expressed in "the quarrels among the settlers, as well as between them and the management". Significantly, the co-operatives with the longest record of success and survival, are religious communities like the Hutterites. And they have survived for centuries, not because of their superior skill in agriculture or their genius for planning, but simply because their members have been *with* one another, in real communion. When the Hutterites presented a petition to President Wilson in 1918, they gave as the fundamental principles of their faith, as concerns practical life, "community of goods and non-resistance". "Our community life is founded on the principle 'What is mine is thine', or, in other words, on brotherly love and humble Christian service according to ACTS II, 44-45: 'And all that believe were together, and had all things in common and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need'."

Among the "advantages" of the Hutterite community Infield gives the following psychological factors: permanent security, freedom from individual economic worries, very high "work satisfaction, with pride in one's unhurried efforts—no competition, but instead friendly co-operation in the common interest. Mental and emotional health are maintained, with no quarrelling, no crime or suicides. A sense of security encourages self-confidence, directness and dignity." "The 'we-feeling' is strongly developed, for the centuries-old behaviour patterns call on each member to participate in the common effort, and important decisions are made by direct vote in the General Assembly. The colony is restricted as to size, thus keeping all relationships on a face-to-face level of intimacy. From his schooling the child learns to fit into the community. Adults easily readjust themselves to changing conditions, for they can choose from among numerous kinds of work."

All this might have been written with Buber's philosophy in mind, and will be worth elaborating in relation to that philosophy; but for the moment I am only concerned to emphasize that on the basis of Infield's study of the Hutterite community, and of a similar study

**Cooperative Communities at Work.* London (Kegan Paul), 1947.

of non-religious co-operative settlements in Palestine, the conclusion emerges, in all its clarity, "that some central emotional impulse, comparable to the religious motive, is important to the success of comprehensive co-operation".

Such emotional impulse is usually called a *mystique*, and it is mainly towards the elaboration of a mystique of anarchism that these notes will range. I would remind those who are afraid of the word *mystique* that even an atheist can be a mystic; even a materialist (cf. Santayana).

15. Nevertheless, one must remember that in a certain sense all *metaphysics* a retreat from reality. It is far from the purpose of these notes to elaborate of freedom which is a compensation for *lack of liberty*. The philosophy of freedom is an activist philosophy- the philosophy of those who *create*—whether as artists, as co-operators, or as personalities. In the philosophy of Existentialism there is an element of compensation: there are too many disillusioned communists in its ranks to give one confidence in its disinterestedness. Metaphysics is the opium of the isolated individual: a community seeks, not so much a religion, as the concreteness of a ritual.

Hegelian dialectics, Marxism in its ideological aspects—all this metaphysical opium was manufactured by people without a living experience of communion: the philosophy of authoritarians and exiles.

16. The bankruptcy of historical materialism as a social philosophy is paralleled by the bankruptcy of logical positivism as a general philosophy. The two movements are, of course, closely related expressions of the *Zeitgeist*: they both proceed from unwarranted assumptions about the nature of reason. The Marxist deduces all social phenomena from economic calculations (figures): the logical positivist would prove everything by mathematical processes. Both in the end (which we have now reached) find themselves in a state of arid logomachy without parallel in the history of thought. They are slaves of their formulae—hard, tolerant, and sadistic. [Bertrand Russel, of course, is not a pure type: as Joad shows in his brilliant review of the *History of Western Philosophy* in the current issue of the *Contemporary Review* (Jan. 1947). There is an unresolved residue of idealism in Russell's philosophy.] The poverty of both historical materialism and logical positivism is explained by their denial of instinctive modes of thought, of super-rational intuitions, the aesthetic nature of perception—in a word, by their surrender of existential *freedom*. They are like snails with one antenna, gyrating either inwards to a point of negation (logical positivists) or outwards, towards limitless affirmations of the commonplace (historical materialists).

Wisdom, as I have insisted ever since I became intellectually conscious, is the needle which comes to rest between reason, and all we comprise in the word romanticism (instinct, intuition, imagination, fantasy). Buber (see §13) uses this metaphor to describe freedom, but he is thinking of the tremors of the needle: wisdom is the direction in which it points.

(*To be continued.*)

Alex Comfort

Social Aspects of Censorship & Pornography

The best way of judging in retrospect the sexual adaptation of a culture is to look at its literature. The best-adapted cultures take their sexuality normally—it is part of life which attracts no more particular notice than eating and drinking—pleasant to recall, and intructive to study. Hellenistic literature is singularly unselfconscious about this—the two normal forms of sexual writing, literature and erotics, exist side by side. Erotics, the study of mutual enjoyment in intercourse, is a feature of any civilised order—it is in the highest sense cultural, because it is part of the process of making something of lasting value out of the primitive appetite.

But there has been no power society where some form of literary censorship has not existed. The existence of censorship has its original roots in the fear of primitive animism that unlucky and sacred words, which included many words related to sexuality, might cause national calamities if taken in vain— But throughout recent history, this idea, though by no means dead, has given place to a censorship operated by power against the three main threats to itself—criticism of power, criticism of religion, and open discussion of sexual matters—the last in part because rulers have always had a hardly-conscious conviction that sexual freedom was in some way related to political liberty, and in part because of the need to appear as the upholders of a morality increasingly based upon fear. The ruling groups, with some exceptions, have tended to regard rigid sexual morals as a commodity not for home consumption, and the standard of personal conduct in courts and governing groups, civil and ecclesiastical, compares badly with that of the public at large. In fact, prudery has been coupled to reformism, as it was after the Restoration. In recent years the more unjust the society, the louder the clamour for the suppression of books alleged to be "dirty"—a clamour which originated sometimes in superstitious fear, sometimes in bad conscience, and sometimes in plain political diversionism.*

The distortion of normality which goes with sexual injustice and asociality produces a characteristic literature, which is properly called pornography is to erotics as prostitution is to marriage. Where a normal

*It is striking that in the case of R. *v.* Charles, regarding a standard medical work, *The Sexual Impulse*, which was suppressed, one of the leading questions was whether the book "was to be put into the hands of the working class"! (1935). (*Vide* Craig, *The Banned Books of England*.)

means a description of harlots, and is singularly apposite, since genuine pornography is to erotics as prostitution is to marrige. Where a normal outlet is available, nobody derives more than anticipatory enjoyment from mere sexiness in literature—civilised cultures produce little pornography, and use it as a condiment: barbarian cultures tend to produce much, and rely on it as a diet. The less satisfactory the sexual life of a culture, the greater the proportion of its literature which is a form of literary self-abuse, and the more abnormal the tone of the contained matter.

Censorship by power against sedition and heresy is easy to understand, but the censorship of genuine pornography is illogical—pornography tends to stabilize an ill-adapted society, rather as prostitution does. The history of censorship in morals is a catalogue of illogicality, partly as a result of the inability of literary moralists to detect what is in fact pornographic, and partly from deeper causes such as the abnormality which goes with the desire to govern. At the present time, suppression is almost wholly directed against work which is serious in intention.—"If ever you touch this filthy thing again," said the Recorder of London to Havelock Ellis, "it will be my duty to send you to prison for a long term"—while genuine pornography, in the form of propaganda for sexual irresponsibility and mere erethism based on animal appetite goes scot-free. The Hays Code in the cinema is conspicuous for its prohibition of references to normal sexuality and to social issues of a serious kind, and its tolerance of mental infantilism and eunuchism in every conceivable form. Social criticism, of course, is the last straw. "You can make vice funny and get away with it," Shaw remarked in one of his prefaces, "but if you make it ugly and despicable you are banned by the moralists." The most remarkable feature of censorship is the astounding perversity of the minds which decide what is or is not to be regarded as filthy. The representation of pubic hair in art, the use of a number of words (mostly Saxon expressions which became "crude" as Norman-French gained ground as a ruling-class language) for which the Latin equivalents are far too clumsy to be current, and a vast collection of oddities whose relation to sexuality is far from obvious fall under a rather erratic ban, which operates discontinuously and sketchily, and deters literary freedom far more by the fact that one cannot tell what it will do next than by the likelihood that there will be trouble about a particular book or phrase. The only certainty is that serious work is more open to interference than mere scurrility, and normality than abnormality. In a play now current, dealing with juvenile prostitution, the Lord Chamberlain's office demanded two deletions—the word "abortion" and a reference to a shirt—they insisted that the phrase "they were both naked" be substituted. The conventions of censorship alter from period to period, as the obsessions of society change—Victorian censorship was most severe on social criticism and on works encouraging the knowledge of erotics, contraception and other civilised sexual studies among working people—the emphasis to-day is on words and phrases. Much of the relative immunity which is enjoyed, however insecurely, by books such as this is due to the work of such writers as Ellis, Shaw, Bradlaugh,

and others, who systematically resisted the censorship, and students like Craig who analysed and ridiculed it. Both these tasks carried a fairly high degree of personal risk, and still do. At the present time the responsibility for action against a particular work rests with the police, though "obscene libels" can be proceeded against on information by a stated number of citizens. The wide powers of entry possessed by the police in search of sexual matter were formerly one of the gravest menaces to personal liberty, but they have been eclipsed in this respect by the even wider powers now adopted for the suppression of sedition. As the emphasis of power shifts from religion and institutional morals to war and conscription, the threats to civil liberty change with it. The débris of the last phase remains, however, and it is still a matter of difficulty for a medical man to get hold of Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* at the British Museum.

The relation between the growth of sexual censorship and the growth of popular literacy is unmistakable [The Cockburn rule, that obscenity consists in the likelihood that matter will corrupt or deprave those susceptible to such influences "beat the Compulsory Education Act by a few months (Craig)]. Although it is vain to seek for consistency in the matter suppressed or tolerated, it is striking that matter of remarkable outspokenness, derived from less shamefaced cultures, persisted throughout the height of Victorianism in the Bible and the Roman and Hellenic classics: remarkable contortions were performed by the moralists in avoiding a collision between their practice of censorship and their respect for these works, and while the classical learning was and is severely mutilated in schools, attempts to censor or rewrite the Bible have not been numerous. But it is singularly unfortunate that the Bible, unlike most primitive literature, contains almost nothing which could serve the cause of sexual education, and much to relate sexual practices to fear and to ritual pollution. Accordingly, while throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century educated people had access to the erotic and philosophical literature of Graeco-Roman culture, the supersession of the Classics by the Bible brought sexual education to a virtual stop among rich and poor alike.

One of the striking phenomena of Fascism has been that while it encourages every perversion by social policy, it exhibits the same zeal in putting down indecency as did Victorianism—with one hand it suppresses sexual books, with the other it encourages illegitimacy and promiscuity as tokens of racial health. 12,000 books from Hirschfeld's library were burned by the Nazis in 1933.* The campaign for purity is naturally fiercer where Fascism is intimately associated with Catholicism, but it is always directed to appease the Conservative element and to discredit the Left, who are vulnerable as adherents, and not always responsible adherents, of sexual freedom.

We have seen that barbarian society attacks pornography, but it is itself the most substantial producer of pornographic literature and films, as atrocity propaganda in war, or as a saleable commodity which is in itself a propaganda against responsibility and self-control, and

*Craig. op. cit.

which, by the erethism and sexual craving which it produces, does much to aggravate the dissatisfaction and frustration of the public which it reaches.

The timidity of contemporary film-pornography is apparent chiefly in the sexual morals which it implies, where "I dare not" waits perpetually upon "I would". Adultery is disapproved, but regarded as a feature of normal life, and it must constitute the plot motif of at least half of those films where that is not provided by murder or robbery. The attitude to all heterosexual offences—homosexual being as rigidly excluded by the film industry as "f———" is by the libraries—is an ambivalent use of sympathy internally and disapproval externally. The producer enlists the sympathy of his audience on behalf of the illicit lovers, and contrives at the same time to preserve their respectability by the death or heroic renunciation of the unwanted third. The same principle holds good in innumerable success stories where the desired object cannot be obtained by morally defensible methods and the god has to be invoked again to procure the wish-fulfilment. This solution differs from melodrama in being morally far more deleterious. One can imagine Macbeth wishing in the same way for the miraculous removal of Duncan, Donalbain, and the rest.

While erotics and books dealing with sex in its natural context are cultural in the true sense, the worst that can be said of the "dirty" literature is that it is a poor substitute for adaptation. In a normally-orientated society it is negligible—it hurts nobody, and if its effect on youth is towards precocity, that is the result of the absence of sexual education and the bleakness of the outlook which young people develop when they are faced with a vista of conscription, war and unemployment. The most serious feature of the history of pornography is its progressive deviation away from mere sexual ribaldry towards more and more abnormal outlets. I have discussed the growth of a sadistic literature, and we have to recognise that at the present moment very nearly all literature, belletristic as well as popular, is in reality a form of pornography—it is more and more a sexual equivalent. It has ceased to be bawdy and has become brutal and scabrous or both. To be bawdy one must also be relatively normal, and we are not.

Because the work of reformers has met with some success, it is most rash to regard the field as won. It is still not possible to report literally the ordinary conversation of normal people. We have some right to discuss sexual matters, but we retain it only so long as we fight for it, and one of the waves of fright or repression to which barbarian societies are liable may destroy it at any moment. It is perhaps as well for us to keep that in mind. The literary campaign of Noyes and others against "cultural Bolshevism", or the attacks on modern experimental art, may develop a bias towards moral purity at any moment, just as they may become anti-semitic at any moment. This group has already shown itself violently hostile to Freudian psychology. The liberty of sexual knowledge and discussion is another aspect of personal freedom which may well need at any moment to be defended, as it was partially won, by the direct action of individuals.

Jean Trieux

French Writing Today

It is possible to study a literary situation by confining oneself to lines of structure, or, on the other hand, by examining minutely the abundance of details. The first method implies a solid knowledge of the past and a clear view of the present; it is not without danger. The second method requires only the making use of what is more spontaneous, but also more futile, in our taste: it is perfidious. There is in originality and invention a considerable portion of untruth. The more clever the lie, the more it is agreeable. To judge a work on the surprise which it causes us, on the first pleasure which it procures us, is to trust to a crazy balance. But it is hardly possible to judge otherwise what the immediate brings us.

In the renewal of theme and invention in writing, French literature has made a visible effort. A little too visible, perhaps. Some of the readers are satisfied with it.

A wave of new readers has been brought by the war. Some writers endeavour to satisfy those readers who ask of literature a substitute for pleasures of which they have been deprived by circumstances. By reaction, others are tempted to deal with the less immediate, with what broadly one might call "the eternal". Others, finally, try to conciliate these two preoccupations. The majority of those who seem worth-while to-day can be classified in this category.

Let us note first the appearance of tragic themes, renewed in the novel. In the preface which he wrote before the war to the French edition of Faulkner's *Sanctuary,* André Malraux pointed out "the intrusion of Greek tragedy into the detective novel". It is under this form that the tragic most often presents itself to us. *L'Etranger* of Albert Camus is the best work in this formula. (The "detective" basis is here in the form of details of crime.) A series of more or less successful attempts has followed, but, apart from *L'Etranger,* we are very far from the astonishing results obtained by the Americans in this field.

There is in the French tradition a reluctance to give the first place to action, and thereby an inaptitude towards pure tragedy. Behind action, the French writer sees the man, and in the first place the character; passions for him obey a permanent necessity, and seldom present themselves as the immediate and unjustified expression of a simple desire. Even more so, they exclude those manifestations of madness with no apparent cause, which get hold of the tragic hero. It is the description of a hero without character, of a stranger to the world and to himself, which has brought Camus to offer us, in an exceptional way, a tragic hero.

This constancy of character, which seems to be lacking in most of the heroes of the American novel, is an obstacle to success in a style which has conquered many of the young French novelists.

In spite of the fact that since the war André Malraux has practically abandoned literature, he remains one of the most read and most appreciated writers. The lecture he gave some time ago at the Sorbonne under the aegis of UNESCO was a kind of official consecration; newspapers and magazines reproduced its contents and commented with enthusiasm or bitterness. In this lecture Malraux attempts with passion, but one must say without great clarity, the rehabilitation of man and the defence of European occidental values menaced by the American and Russian systems of culture. Malraux seems to attempt a serious reassessment, because his work is not exempt from a certain ambiguity which allows the greatest enemies of his present thought to use it. In *La Condition Humaine* and *Les Conquerants,* there are some of the most phrenetic heroes of modern literature, the most abandoned to passions which become an intoxicating game, whose consequences and a great part of whose responsibility escapes the hero. The acceptance or the provocation of tragedy is also a means to elude some of the problems of the condition of man. There is still in Malraux some traces of a taste for the crushing of man by his Gods, compensated, it is true, by a revolt which one should not underestimate. His influence on young intellectuals is certain. It exerts itself by the contagious enthusiasm with which Malraux treats the problems of action, duty . . . by crystallised erotism in this immense desire of the conqueror to impose his seal, though he knows its derisory nature. One finds the heroes of Malraux everywhere in contemporary novels and in life itself. War has been for them an opportunity to express a passion which to-day tries with some difficulty to find its place in humanism.

Before his triumphs as leader of a philosophic school, as essayist, novelist, and playwright, Jean Paul Sartre was already a novelist of great talent. He has also contributed to introduce American writing into French taste. His novel, *Le Mur,* had an incontestable success. He has since concentrated particularly in the portrayal of manners; his heroes have the restlessness of beings who cannot bear the world and men; their life is perpetually tormented, they try impossible malleability, and they suffer from a freedom within themselves which they never really succeed in grasping. His last novel, *Les Chemins de la Liberté,* portrays a professor in whom the author himself has been detected; he takes his little tired curiosity in a humanity full of restlessness, which seeks compensation for its mediocrity and its idleness without ever finding it. This work, full of colour and life, is one of the most important of his last few years.

We encounter a near-naturalism that has discovered some new passional reactions, which he often uses with success and which have the attraction of scandal. We cannot talk here any longer of tragedy. We shall find the tragic elsewhere, in the confessions, the philosophical essays, in the logical developments of immobile and lucid thought.

War, deportation and resistance have been the source of an

abundant literature, full of horror, voluntarily bare and implacable. But it lacks form, its construction is feeble, the structure made of events is exterior to man himself and presents itself like a kind of carapace (one is tempted to say shell). Two works, however, seem to stand out from the whole. They are, *Drole de Jeu* by Roger Vailland and *L'Universe concentrationaire* (followed by *Les Jours de notre mort*) by David Rousset.

The first is the history of a resistance sector in Paris; more precisely, the information sector. Its appearance is very much in the French tradition, very Stendhalian. All through these pages linger the threatening shadows of Sade and Laclos. For the heroes of *Drole de Jeu,* conspiracy and war are an island of peace; they can at last give all they have in an adventure which is to their measure. The principal hero of the novel, Marat, is an individualist who finds in conspiracy a means of expressing himself fully and of playing unconstrainedly the difficult and disturbing game of love and death. From the atmosphere of petty crime and brothels of 1930, Marat has passed into the great adventure which all his being desired. We are here in the presence of the eternal condottiere of the intellect. But this hero and, it follows, this novel, appears rather as a survival than as an indication of the future.

The work of David Rousset is completely different. The author effaces himself before the facts exposed with a cold measured, heavy realism. We are thrown into an implacable and grotesque machine—man-destroying. This concentrationist universe is represented as a closed circle, far from the world, obeying laws which are not ours. For how long? Because we feel that this little monstrous world spreads, that one of its frontiers already touches us, and that to-morrow it will perhaps enclose us within its borders, will park us behind its barbed wire and impose on us its laws and way of life. In *Les Jours de Notre Mort* a prisoner, a German Communist, carries out the dangerous attempt to justify some rules of the lesser evil which have no longer any connection with what can still be considered as right and justice. To kill or to let three men be killed in order to save four, to leave the choice to beings who have received an ill-defined capacity to judge the weight and price of human material, this crude arithmetic gains little by little on a morality that hardly continues to arouse any enthusiasm or energy. But as it is, the work of Rousset is strong. Its attitude of objectivity makes more horrible the tableaus which the author paints for us as he would a fair or a dance at Charenton.

We should also note *Les amitiés particuliéres* of Peyrefitte. We have there a work where the present has no part. In a boarding school conducted by priests, young boys live according to an easy rule and the subtleties of their young souls. In a delicately perverse accent, this novel continues the work of the great French psychological writers, in particular Marcel Proust.

In summing up, we can admit briefly that the French novel is undergoing a crisis. It struggles between a tragedy which obsesses it and the drama or comedy which makes its past. It seems to us that

the perspective of the American novelists could well be used by French writers on their characters. That, undoubtedly, is a means which would allow a renewal of the novel.

Let us note, lastly, that recent events predispose man to express the curse of which he feels himself the object, rather than to create living characters. The philosophy of Sartre is everywhere strong, and it touches us most when it reaches the problem of the relationship of "me" and "the others". This is a question which the contemporary novel has some difficulty in resolving.

Some critics go so far as to predict and desire the death of the novel, whose weaknesses they indicate. Autobiography and confession tend more and more to become its substitutes.

* * *

Where the imagination is difficult to exercise, self-observation, meditation, and the elaboration of systems are easy. In the same way, often enough from economic causes, we see the entry in strength on the literary stage of the philosophers and professors. Have they themselves created this state of affairs, or has the demand merely incited them to reply? It is probable that the war has provoked among the public the desire to illuminate and to pose, regarding man, his comportment, his destiny, questions which in peacetime are rather left unsaid. From this arises a greater facility for the professionals to express themselves.

On the other hand, the literature of the professors has become so abundant that one can doubt whether it has a corresponding demand of such amplitude. But it is equally necessary to recognise that the professional philosophers have made a real effort to make attractive a part at least of their work. The existentialists, for example, have incorporated their theses into short stories, novels, plays, dissertations on contemporary politics. The review of Jean-Paul Sartre is called *Temps modernes,* which excuses it from expatiating too much on the preoccupation whence it has issued.

There is a superabundance of metaphysics in contemporary literature. From simple reportage to scholarly works, there are few texts where the great questions of human destiny, of its relationship to the universe, are not posed. The three names which emerge at this moment (leaving aside excellent writers who gave the full measure of their talent between the two wars and of whom we shall not speak here) are still those of Sartre, Camus and Malraux. The first was a professor of philosophy and wrote *L'Etre at le Néant.* The second is the author of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe,* a philosophical essay written on the edge of existentialism in an impeccable and bare style. Camus continues the investigation of Kierkegaard, Jaspers and also of Nietzsche, Unamuno, Pascal. He has been called a "Pascal without God", which locates reasonably well his position in French thought and literary expression.

As for Malraux, in this domain he has merely preceded by several years the contemporary writers, and his preoccupations are theirs.

Let us also mention the great effort of the Christian essayists to

keep themselves in the current of thought and reply to the inquietudes of modern man. The review *Esprit* (with Emmanuel Mannier) is the most important, if not the most successful attempt of that kind.

Lastly, a word on the interesting review *Critque* which is animated by Georges Bataille and which, in the form of reviews of recent works, presents, in its expositions, a faithful panorama of French thought.

* * *

To end these hasty notes, let us say a few words on poetry.

The war gave poetry an importance and even a commercial value which it had not enjoyed for a long time before. Poets had never ceased to preoccupy themselves with lyrical expression of thought, but the reader did not participate very much. Events have given back to poetry part of its prestige (which it is now again in the process of losing). During the war, it became the vehicle of thoughts which poetic esotericism allowed to be expressed with least danger. It must also be noted that the poets, in particular those of surrealist persuasion, participated in great numbers in the war and the resistance, and that they have embroidered on events with complacency. Aragon and Eluard became the bards of patriotism and are officially consecrated. It is certain that lyricism, like tragedy, finds in war a favourable climate.

Thus, there has been talk of a renaissance of French poetry. If a renaissance took place, it was short-lived. No characteristic or even valuable work has marked these last few years.

We can isolate two major tendencies of theme and two others of form. With regard to theme, certain poets wish to make poetry a means of knowledge. Others see it a no more than a game, disturbing and exciting, it is true. With regard to form, the traditional poetry, respecting the laws of number, rhythm and rhyme, lives again without great originality. For the new poetry on the other hand, the constraints of prosody are practically non-existant. It is expressed in a brilliant and decorated prose, pullulating with metaphor.

These two tendencies of theme and two tendencies of form make four possible combinations which are all manifested in contemporary poetry: we have a "demiurgy" of regular form, and we continue the "game" of the free-versers, as well as the opposite combinations. Between these four combinations there are naturally numerous other interpretations.

Since the death of Valery, the most representative of the poets in the classic style (which, however, is by no means rigid) is Patrice de la Tour du Pin, whose *La Quête de Joie* was, ten years ago, a literary event. The promise of La Tour du Pin has only been partly fulfilled, and his recent *Somme de poésie* was a disappointment for many. On the other hand, he has not been followed; the classical renaissance has not taken place and the swallow has remained alone. Poetry of regular form is generally mediocre, imitating rather than perpetuating the older poets.

Surrealism constitutes the most important and the most brilliant (I dare not say the most living) tendency. Aragon abandoned the movement long ago. Eluard has some difficulty in maintaining his reputation, which is enormous. It is nevertheless right to ask whether

posterity will see in him anything more than a discreet poet, persevering in the refining of a limited vocabulary, a kind of Parny who has flown across the flame of surrealism without being burnt by it.

The new surrealist convoy does not seem destined to maintain the immense promise made by the pre-war theoreticians, or even to maintain surrealism at its old level. Its present production is much more mediocre and less living than that which was given us in 1930.

In their recent poems, Benjamin Peret and André Breton are not disappointing, but they are not likely to make surrealism proceed from the zone of interia in which it rests at the moment. Jacques Prévert, however, in light and facile poems, rejuvenates surrealism with his popular spirit and his systematic employment of devices which were very fashionable some centuries ago.

We should note, as making the link between the old and new schools, Jules Supervielle. It is not impossible that through him poetry will one day find a way out.

Is it necessary, in conclusion, to make a judgment of value? We have only examined details, not even in the mass, but of a few themes. Through Sartre, Camus, Malraux however, we find a trend which is that of the great literature of France. We can say sincerely that there is room for hope.

(Translated by M. L. Berneri and G. Woodcock.)

Bekasi: Any Village Burnt—
Brian A. Rowley

The last soldiers are putting on their packs.
Hens pick in the dust,
and a thin grey pie-dog
slips between the charred posts of a hut.

Across the paddy and beyond the palms
the peasants wait.
Light flickers on the muscles of their shoulders,
still hot from ploughing, sweating in the afternoon.

Still hot from ploughing,
glad of the relief,
two days before they watched the strangers killed,
while the bullocks stood loosely.

And now they return to cook their evening rice
when the fires burn out.

Derek Stanford

Rights of the Imagination

Is it possible—without resorting to the well-smoked glasses of Party-line letters—to speak of certain systems of thought as essentially poetic and others as not? Can one, for example, make a clear demarcation between politics, poetic and non-poetic? Are some of our theologies specifically poetic? Are philosophies open to such division, too?

Expressed in such a fashion the partisan approach is seen to imply a momentous schism. Where shall the line be? Who must be included? Who is for the darkness: Dante or Blake?

Such a statement as this, of course, exaggerates. The original logic is less drastically applied. Or, perhaps one should say, less ingeniously; for critics, who sneer at Tolstoy's "What is art" as the crude aesthetics of a puritan, spend much of their time in casuistry, retaining or casting out 'difficult cases'.

Neither is this Inquisitor's Fallacy reserved for employment by Party critics alone. Outside of those organs of political opinion, where the arts are measured by a ready programme-rule, one finds this heresy-hunting assessment practised by pioneer independent minds. Even the thoughtful young D. S. Savage manifests symptoms of this tendency to ban.

"It is," he writes—speaking of the poetic being—"an organisation of mind to which some attitudes and ideas are favourable, and others quite definitely hostile." "Do not," warned Coleridge again and again, "let us introduce an Act of Uniformity against the poets"; but this is exactly what Mr. Savage attempts. Writing of his purpose in "The Personal Principle" he describes it as an "intention to indicate . . . the outlines of a valid creative attitude for the modern poet and"—he adds significantly—"not only the poet". In other words, what he largely effects is an estimation of individual poets according to some extra-poetic concept. Poetry must answer to his *a priori plan.**

Even without the author's aforesaid possession of definite criterions and values to apply, it seems still correct to speak of his effort, in this instance, as an *a priori plan* (perhaps a partly preconscious one).

A masterly explanation of the part which this unrecognised mental intent plays in our thought is made by John Henry Newman in his "Development of Christian Doctrine". "An idea under one or other of its aspects", he writes, "grows in the mind by remaining there; it becomes familiar and distinct, and is viewed in its relations; it leads to other aspects, and these again to others,

*These words express the present writer's deeply considered opinion. It is true that the author speaks of arriving "at the outlines of a valid creative attitude" through the method of "examining certain particular writers"; but the stress of purpose falls on the "larger intention", and not upon the problem of individual figures.

subtle, recondite, original, according to the character, intellectual and moral, of the recipient; and thus a body of thought is gradually formed without his recognising what is going on within him. And all this while, or at *least* from time to time, external circumstances elicit into formal statement the thoughts which are coming into being in the depths of his mind, and soon he has to begin to defend them".

In a similar way, on a much lower level, some time ago a verse-magazine requested poetical contributions of every shade and expression of opinion, religious and political, "other than fascist". Naturally, events must answer for much. It furnishes, however, a further example of the recent sectarian hag-riding of verse.

Perhaps the main factor in this misconception lies in our search for a Living Way. Once having grasped our private formula—political, religious, or philosophical—we apply it left and right without discrimination; and all that it fails to fit must be Death.

In this, we reverse the attitude of Arnold, who hoped to find in the free study of art a guide to more harmonious behaviour. "More and more," he wrote in 1880, "mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life to us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry."

Here, it would seem, his approach was saner; for one of the many qualities of art is its power to provide fresh supplies of life, new stores of experience far beyond our own.

"Modern man," writes Fromm in his book *The Fear of Freedom,* "is starved of living": he endures a living death.

From just this cell of his "separate fantasy" art liberates man into more spacious life. To the spiritual anaemia of daily existence, the malnutrition of heart and mind, the terrible tedium of economic habit, art is an antidote, a tonic and escape. What the ritual, the pageant, the mystery-play meant to the serf of the Middle Ages, art means now to the sensitive being trapped in the deepening uniform rut. If, as Hegel and Vico seem to think, the cycle of plastic expression is passed, at least, our society has never so much needed the variety-producing stimulus of art.

At the root of the sickly pallor of sameness which the face of our civilisation reveals there lies the factor of specialisation commanding the whole of economic life. Now man develops with the work at which he labours, according to the faculties called into play. The greater his craft and responsibility, the wider and deeper grows the nature of the man.

To-day, the forces of mass-production have called into being a robot of flesh. This new slave-figure of mechanisation must endlessly repeat his identical act . . . a kind of static treadmill inferno for the mind. In such a situation, the main concern is the rescue of man from these economic hulks. In the meanwhile, however, one must keep alive his spirit; the life-hungry heritage in him must be saved. One of the principal means to this is art with its vitamin-capsules of imaginative experience, its pipe-line feeding for humanity besieged.

The paradox is that man's fear of freedom, the way he excludes

himself from fuller life, is in proportion to how much he lacks it: the round of his boredom has made him a coward.

So it comes about that he wishes to exist in a world of familiar categories, a world where things have their places and their label, a world of "fixtures and definites". This well-known, 'stay-put', inventoried realm is largely the work of intelligence; of what we may term utility-logic, with its ready-made titles and convenient distinctions.

If the life-hungry man, afraid of life, feels himself at home, in his threadbare fashion, in this known world of intellect, he fears the unknown world of art. For him, it represents the challenge of novelty which calls for an individual response. This last, however, is what he cannot give, after trying for years to convince himself he is no individual but a meek collective cipher ('just an ordinary fellow like anybody else').

From this, it follows that the known world of logic—more truly, common-sense' or everyday 'reason'—attempts to dictate, to persecute, and marshal the unknown minority-world of art. Here, by means of Academies, of critic-dictators, and Golden Rules, the world of art is placed under supervision; exists beneath the half-blind regard of the Norm. Examples of this abound in history: the Aristotelian Means Test of the Schools, the absolute monarchy of taste-maker Boileau, and the O.G.P.U. patrolling of all State art.

[As an illustrating aside, on may note how the popular entertainment art, the new *kitch* culture of the Nineteenth Century, influenced by the great Romantic Revolution, hung upon the concept of sentimental fancy (imagination's tee-total cousin). The point of this is that fancy still moves, for all its surface tinsel attraction, in the world of "definites and fixities" (as Coleridge has it in his definition), while imagination, according to that critic, creates, not original relationships, but states.]

If the bugbear to a free understanding of art in the Eighteenth Century was formal convention (the salon's invasion of the studio), its enemy to-day is ideolatry. Perhaps the most prevalent example of this is the socio-economic assessment: judgment of the long-term message of art in the speech of short-term policies.

This world of partisan totems and taboos is the sphere of mechanical 'regulation' thinking, of collectivised concepts, and 'stick-on' values, of ready-made inflexible Yeas and Nays. The part of thought in such a world is not to estimate in individual fashion but to blindly apply pre-determined standards; to pass or prohibit: a policeman of the mind.

Contrasted with this is imagination—the root and the stem and the flower of art. This type of thinking does not prohibit, but identifies itself with the object of approach. Through this creative sympathy, subject and object are brought together; like and unlike in the world of the unknown, whose category is that of art.

In his "Notes on the Originality of thought" Vivante offers a useful definition. He views intuition as the midwife of value, and compares it with the "impoverished" nature of willed, mechanical system-ridden thinking. "In fact," he writes, "the concept of intuition

coincides with the concept of original value." In other words, value is a type of revelation; in its first perception, involuntary and unique.

Again, we see it is this which man fears. Possessed of no law save the concept of habit, he fears the birth of value as the harbinger of change. In the same way, deprived of all inward light, he fears revelation will dazzle him blind.

This intuitive mode of thought Vivante maintains is common to all original, constructive, poetic cognition; and considers it as arising from a sense of "internal necessity".

He next defines poetry as "a self-necessary realising of values and relations", and again describes intuition as "an identification of values and forms".

And so, the substance and expression of poetry, the form it selects and the values it enshrines, are all of them products of an inward decision. In a way, they have all of them chosen themselves.

This inner necessity determining art, shaping from inside its outer aspects, is something the Philistine tries to deny. Granting one the premise of 'enthusiasm', of 'inspiration', or a 'fine frenzy', he then desires to channelise this force to make it serve ulterior ends. So art is treated by the non-intuitive mind as a kind of mandated territory where the artist is deemed unfit to rule. In the Eighteenth Century—as observed—this supervision was mostly formal, concerning the style, the technical etiquette, the relation in the work of part to part. In the Nineteenth Century, the ruling was substantial, concerning the proper subject-matter, the type of situations to be used, the sort of incidents one must not touch. In our own times, this law from without, pronounced by critics and pedagogues, is chiefly an ideological fiat, concerning the values which art should contain.

Like all forms of energy taking organic growth and expression, this "internal necessity" of art demands its own field of freedom; the space within which to realise itself. Just as it requires a proper formal scope, and freedom with regard to choice of content, so, too, it requires a liberty of approach concerning the values it discovers and reveals.

Poetry makes its decision, then, in freedom; approaching a given attitude not with analysis but imagination. It will not be dictated to, for poetry like love cannot arise from an endeavour of the conscious will alone. It can only be born out of impulse, within freedom; and no purely intellectual concept of freedom can create and guarantee the imaginative freedom out of which the freedom of poetry springs.

"A poem," Coleridge somewhere observes, "contains the same elements as a prose composition . . . The difference therefore must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object being proposed." The difference most relative to this present theme is the greater "internal necessity" of poetic composition over prose (always excepting poetic prose and writing of an unusual voltage).

Along with this strange initial drive, there goes, too, a power of deeper intuition (effect being in proportion to the cause). This being so, one discovers in the poem a greater apprehension of the

things described than that to be found in a work of prose. In contrast to the non-intuitive mind, producing the composition in prose, the intuitive temperament of the poet penetrates the object of his contemplation deeper, wins past the surface-value of appearances, and more strongly apprehends its make-up or essence. Thus it occurs that the poetic image (the image of imagination or intuition) displays a degree of livingness, of immediacy, and intimate presence far in advance of the image of prose (the idiom of conceptual thought acclimatised to the common mind).

From this, one begins to understand that when a great poet turns to politics, using it as the material of his verse, he will seldom speak like a Party parrot who endlessly repeats its printed creed, but will search at the root for its basic meaning—the power by which it appeals to men. For example, in the case of the poet intrigued by the fascis' ideology, it will not be the fuehrers and rubber-batons that weave an enchantment about his mind, but the sense of order which its thinkers propound, its vital mystique, and heroic myth. Similarly, with the Communist poet, it will seldom be *Das Kapital*—with its crabbed, ingenious, economic dogma—but rather the concept of brotherhood which firmly attracts his imagination.

Politically speaking, according to our views, we may look upon the poet qua citizen, voter, candidate, or Party voice, as a menace to society. We shall find, however, if we read his work aright—taking him now in his first poetic rôle—that compensation for this danger is made: in ethical, aesthetic, and political terms. Studying his verse with an understanding patience, we learn to know more of this hostile belief than could be obtained from any Party pundit. We subject ourselves to its positive caress. Equipped, as we are now, with intimate knowledge we can better comprehend the force which we must face. We can even adapt that fundamental fraction of truth or significance (by which all faiths exist) to make more complete our own opponent system. We can pick the Devil's brains in the Angel's cause.

"No freedom for the enemies of freedom," cried St. Just, presenting the thin edge of the totalitarian wedge. Poetry, however, is an anarchistic process, an autonomous organum, a Yea-saying state.

If freedom is still to remain our ideal, its concept must be considerably widened. It is not enough to prohibit tyranny. Freedom must steal from tyranny the germ of order which the latter hoped to raise, and proceed to develop it as voluntary pattern. Freedom must learn to encourage order.

Just this art of assimilation, of integrating antitheses, poetry teaches in the highest extent.

In a way, though, this service of poetry is not its cardinal gift or use. For the aesthetic libertarian, whose creed consists of freedom and art, the main ground for faith is the simple belief that nature reveals a certain order. This basic and primal form or law he feels intuition best apprehends. As one of the great Romantics observed, Art is nature's adult speech with man.

Without doubt, the clearest utterance from this position of recent

years is that which Herbert Read has made. "As for the knowledge of the external world," he writes, "in so far as we can be certain of the objectivity of such knowledge, I observe that it reveals a certain structural harmony in the universe which is of the greatest significane." Classical art, he then defines "as the imitation of universal pattern", and romantic art as "the creation of free pattern". It would seem, however, that the latter is no more than a variation upon the former; an equivalent asymmetrical approach.

Our perception and study of these revealed forms inculcates us, as Plato maintained, with the fine sense of harmony, creating a touch-stone of inward order. This harmony and the regimen which it entails, as Wittgenstein and Read believe, are a property and discipline of Janus nature, equally aesthetic and ethical. "Aesthetics and ethics," wrote the former, "are one"; while Read remarks that "the ethical and the aesthetical are but two aspects of one reality—of acquiring a knowledge of reality". This final reality would seem to be none other than the quality of harmony itself, whose manifestation in the ethical is virtue and in the aesthetic, 'closed' or 'open' form. In fact, this harmony appears as the source of all intelligible approaches to life, as father of the great Platonic trinity of values. What, after all, is the basis of truth but harmony of knowledge with things as they are; of goodness, but harmony of man in his behaviour; of beauty, but harmony of perception? Understood in its proper fashion this study of three-fold harmony yields us a simple co-aesthetics of art, society, and man.

Considered from the harmonic stand-point, where the aesthetic and the ethical are one, the political faith of the poet does not matter (providing that he has "the experiencing nature"). It is true, of course, that what he makes of these political approaches or faiths will depend on his own poetic calibre; his capacity for apprehension and expression. If his poetic ability is small, it would make no difference whether he chose fasces, hammer-and-sickle, or the The Cross, as symbols with which to embroider his verse. Stage-props cannot, of themselves, make a play.

It is treatment, then, not attitude; the handling of its data as symbols which count. As Edmund Wilson observes in his book "Triple Thinkers", "the ultimate worth of a work of art is the amount of 'life-force' within it. The badge under which it chooses to exist does not matter—aesthetically". To a figure of absolute poetic energy all approaches would be interchangeable.

Great art, it appears, reflects, in little, properties of cosmic tension and balance, of conflicts and their due resolution (all those conditions where harmony expresses itself, so to speak, in action; in a kind of contrapuntal way). Art is a drama of organic pattern. Within it, in check, in the finished work, there exists a relation of part to part, of force to force, of figure to figure as antagonist to protagonist. It is not the separate symbols of the drama which are important (the symbols regarded in any literal fashion), but the sense of drama which their friction creates. A work of art may therefore be measured by that degree in which it succeeds in harmonising the friction within it; the

extent to which it consummates the artist's inner need. And so, the symbols are interchangeable; the sense of drama, alone, a constant.

To witness this drama and endure its purge is to plunge ourselves into reality; to strip off our dress of sophistry and habit, and give ourselves up to the waves of cosmic force.

In this vital second-hand experience through art, the starved human faculties are cleansed and fed; we learn to know the boundaries of the human situation and some of the areas lying in between. Brought into contact with a picture of our needs, we discover it, on study, to be our map of freedom. ("Freedom," wrote Schelling, "is the consciousness of necessity").

Therefore as poetry nourishes freedom poetry must itself be left free.

Patent Pending—James Laughlin

I have an invention
ready for the patent

office which I know
will benefit mankind

it is a kind of ink
and little pen and

magnifying glass so
everyone can write

the parables of Jesus
on their fingernails

and read them there
the minute that their

hands begin to feel
like picking up a gun.

At the End of War—

Richard Eberhart

God, awful and powerful beyond the sky's acre,
Lord God who looks down upon fighting men,
Who sees the bloody folly of them and their wickedness,
The Admiral with his cap and the private with his can,
The aviator shrouded in goggles and the marine bayonetted,
The men in the bureaus mating rubber stamps, carbonizing history,
The poets raving in their uncontestable ravening
The war poets who were ever at war
Before the wars, and after the wars.

Forgive them, that all they do is fight
In blindness and fury,
Forgive them for passion, and animality
Like a cloud vitiating their members,
Forgive mankind for its abominable stupidity
And fury of action,
And men for the misuse of their intelligence,
And for the intelligence that must ever be misused,
For the impenetrable fierceness you have put into them.

And may their guts justly come to rot,
The Admiral, the private
The aviator and the bayonetted or garroted,
In bureaus the silhouetted
In pages the gavotted
Or the hooded eagles.

May they all be established in the grace of time
Far away from the scenes of their crime,
Their bones awash on Himavat
Or their flesh blown apart in the air,
Translated from the terrible mummery of humanity
Into the translucence of Thy care.

And done with passion, ego gone,
Self-deceiving deceased.
The unforgivability
Unpretendable,
Protect him in the pain of his erroneous breath,
Bring him to account,
Bring him to judgment,
Let the show be over and the yelling quieted.

Then, Lord God Almighty,
Visit upon mankind Thy terrible wrath
Merciless in the great eye of Thy mercy,
Altogether annihilate him, in hell,
Or in the dust of eternal nothingness,
But be Thou his condemner,

Take his life who gave it to him,
Destroy him,
Bring to an end imperfection,
And to an end his eternal frivolity.

(His passions shall be minimized
And his wars seem a dark blot
And he shall suffer plenitude
With the resurgence of the grain).

For they cannot think straight, or remember what they said,
Cannot keep their word,
Or realize how soon they will be dead,
Nor distinguish between verities,
Who lust over presences,
Nor be faithful
Who are wrathful,
Nor escape animal passion
With cross-bow, slit-trench, Napalm bomb, atom bomb.

For shadows punish them when they are bright
And pride ruins them when they are strong
And time is the just instrument
That sweeps the seaman and the Admiral along,
May they never escape Thy wrath,

May they be woken up, blasted late,
Or reduced to eternal silences,
But may, pray God Almighty,
Man the cocky fighter,
The stupid and the self-destroyer,
The selfish and the vain,
The harmful cheater
The malicious debater,
The incurable self-lover
And the boring warrior,
The simpleton killer

May he learn humility
May humility be insinuated
More subtly than evil
Which brought ruin rocking him

May he turn the other cheek
Not bitten yet by worm of hate
May joy be his abandonment
In Thy forgiveness early and late

And may he learn not to fight
And never to kill, but love,
Never, never to kill, but love,
May he see Thy Holy light.

Elegy on the Closing of the French Brothels—Lawrence Durrell

For HENRY MILLER
And GEORGE KATSIMBALIS.

I

Last of the great autumnal capitals.
Disengaging daily like a sword
The civil codes, behaviour, friendship, love,
In house of shining glass
On tablecloths satined with pools of light,
By the rambling river's evening scents,
Carried your freight of pain so lightly:
As towards evening when the inkwell overturns
And at last the figure which has sat
Motionless for hours, pours himself out
One glass of moonlight, drinks it, and retires.

By the railway arches a stone plinth:
Under the gas-lamps shadows in lumpy hats:
So many ways of dividing up the self!
Correspondences moving outwards along a line
Of nerves, the memory of letters
Smelling like apples in an empty cupboard,
And at midnight the pall of clocks
At odds among themselves, the shuffling
Of innumerable packs of cards where each shall see
One day his face instead of fortune's be.

II

Bound here to the great axis of the sex,
Black source that fed your manners and your arts,
Gave information and vivacity to food and linen,
Determined as the penetration into self-abuse:
For each separation by kisses forges new bonds.
Three or four words on the back of a letter,
Tessa waiting at a corner with all she feels,
The rain glittering in that peacock's eye,
As heavy with sense as a king's letter with seals.

Here the professional observer met you,
The amateur in melancholy,
To the swish of a fountain, drinking from a glass
Under a man on horseback, talking to
A girl with a poisoned finger.

Women turned over in the mind and each
A proper noun, an act of trespass
Improper for its aberration but accepted:
As in a mirror one is twice but accepts.
So in these magazines of love they moved,
Experience misbegotten in each face like rings
In wood, were commentators on our weakness,
Through cycles of repentance in the blood,
Exhausted the body's ugly contents in a sigh,
Left hard as ash the object's shape, an art
Eros began, self-murder carries on.

III

Of all the rich sicknesses, autumnal Paris,
This self-infection was the last and best,
Where friends or self-possession could be earned
Through the mystery of a damp slit
Like a tear in an old fur coat,
A hole in a paper lantern where the seeing I
Looked out and measured one
By the ferocious knuckle of a sex
Standing like a hambone, the winged amulet
Of a phallus ready to acknowledge
Our membership in the body of a tribe
Holy and ridiculous at once,
Symbol of unrecognised desire, pain, pain.

You might have seen silence flower in eyes,
The tobacco eyes of every human critic,
Or a mouth laid along the meniscus
Of a lighted glass blazing like a diamond.

All the great brothels closed saved Sacré Coeur!
Altars boarded up from the inheritors,
The nameless donors inhabiting marble fanes
On peninsulas gold in sunlight
Under the oleanders printed in warm moss,
The bare ankles playing on a flute,
Selecting the bodies of boys, the temporary
Poor refuge of a kiss within a mirror;
Powder of statues in a grove, born old,
Born sightless, wingless, never to be loved.

IV

Crude in his coat of nerves and hair
Whose kisses like apostles go about
On translated business, never quite his own,
Derives in the obscure medium of the body,
Dense as in a glass coffin, the retrievéd sprite,
Himself holding a holy bottle and asleep,
Below the ice that covers the whole pond.

All these rotten galleries were symbols
Of us, where the girls like squirrels
Leaned in the tarnished mirrors, sighing.
A wind in empty clothing, while the destroyer
Sorted his glasses for just the right medicine,
The anatomist selected his folly and cut it open
Hoping just this once it would shriek under the knife.

Below us, far below, upon the stairway somewhere
Tessa had already combed the dark disorder
Of curls: the flash of pectorals in a mirror
Invented already this darker niece of Egypt
Who left the bone hashish-pipe by the pillow
And went, uneasy in red slippers like the dust in urns.
Smashed columns, swollen with leaves, deserted walks
Rides overgrown and wells left unreflecting,
And more: the laurels which embitter those they crown.

V

We suffer according to the terms we make
With time, allowing to be rooted from us
Like decaying teeth those few great healers
Who understand all the penalties,
Were never afraid of Gods, and for brief spaces
Inhabited us and our familiar actions,
Our own unconquered pain and pleasure.

Now the city settles swollen in the sea
Of its failures—I cannot protect or alter she who lies
Condensed in sleep against a sleeping arm;
All that the common man could do, building like rat
His parliaments of prejudice and fear by a dead index.
It is not enough. We have still to outgrow prohibition.
For the beloved will be no happier
Nor the unloved less hungry when the miracle begins,
Yet both will be ineffably disclosed
In their own natures by simplicity,
Like roses in a giving off of grace.

Folding a Shirt—Denise Levertov

Folding a shirt, a woman stands
still for a moment, to recall
warmth of flesh, her careful hands

heavy on a sleeve, recall
a gesture or the touch of love;
she leans against the kitchen wall

listening for a word of love,
but only finds a sound like fear
running through the rooms above.

With folded clothes she folds her fear
but cannot put desires away
and cannot make the silence hear.

Unwillingly she puts away
the bread, the wine, the knife,
smooths the bed where lovers lay

while time's unhesitating knife
cut away the living hours,
the common rituals of life.

POEM — *George Sims*

All that has follied with the sun is done:
To-day has been of autumn fires and where
Cordage of old blossomers in fine rage
Thrums, this day paused an old man, before the
Arguing windweight, on last begotten
Fallen husks and rubbishy leaves. He was
A strong man made gentle, his high cheekskin
As a rose petal with a silver needled beard:
Well aware of the season of departures,
His was a light grasp upon the apparitionals.
His eyes voyaged through, enjoyed mortality.
He knew us only as children
Afloat on a raft on a flooded field
Who may sink but cannot come to harm.

Edward Rawstron

Science and the Novel

After investigating the novels of Dostoievsky a scientist lately remarked that he was impressed with the chaos of the Russian author's mind. More particularly, he was impressed with the wealth of intellect allowed to run riot through lack of scientific training. He wanted to see scientists apply themselves to fiction—not so much the specialists of bio-chemistry, astro-physics, or palæontology, but men of broad scientific knowledge and training.

There is a cool assumption here, namely, that a scientist knows what a good novel is about when he has read it. If he doesn't (and does he?) he obviously cannot judge where the existing novel is deficient and where it needs remoulding. It would be interesting to put a scientist to read a few novels of life for life's sake. Let him tackle Thackeray, Conrad, Scott, and Flaubert. Better still, let him get down to a couple of volumes of Gunnar Gunnarsson's aimless, nostalgic, fictitious reminiscences, or a dose of Reymont in his 1,200-page Nobel Prize novel, *The Peasants,* written entirely round the life of a tiny Polish village, without an idea or an intellect in the whole tale. This is the acid test.

Provide the didactic element, or a stimulating controversy between intelligent characters in the drama, and then the scientist will very likely find something to get hold of. For this reason novelists as far apart as Dickens and Dostoievsky, Kingsley and Tolstoy, can make some appeal; the man of science can put them down at the last page without feeling he has entirely wasted his time!

But the intellectual and didactic elements are not the essence of any great novel. In fact, it is precisely in these elements that the foregoing authors' works have partly or wholly died to posterity. Nobody now reads Dickens to learn about the sins of selfishness and brutality, the public disgrace of poverty in the midst of plenty, or the moral lusciousness of a God-fearing virgin; nor is Tolstoy turned up for his discovery of the truth about Christianity or the necessity of pacifism; and Dostoievsky's interminable third-person monologues about the nature of human motives are thought at least as cumbersome and unreliable as they are brilliant. These authors are read for the rest . . . not for the lectures they chose to give us, but for the sheer abundance of life which their marvellous sensibilities could not help revealing.

The rabid didactic novelist is first cousin to the pamphleteer, whose ideas make a bold blaze for a day and fade with the setting sun of his generation. It is not as purveyors of good ideas, but as helpless artists that Dickens and Dostoievsky, Kingsley and Tolstoy are remembered to-day—that aesthetic part of them which they them-

selves respected least, or even despised in the case of Tolstoy. In other words, alongside of their precious ideas and earnest theories, these masters of the written word had a supreme faculty for creating men, lives, scenes, moments; for narrating unforgettable happenings in the stormy tide of our little history. A few, like Flaubert and Conrad, created this and nothing else. Or, if they intruded a few ideas, these were integral with the narrative and reached us as the wisdom of poets, not as the exhortations of saviours or the doctrines of pedagogues; still less as the findings of scientists or the slogans of pamphleteers. The result is that we seldom have to excuse any part of their works by referring to the date of writing, but can devour them whole as they stand.

According to Bernard Shaw, "All great art is didactic". And probably it is precisely because he has lived up to this notion that Shaw is not a great artist. He is a great man—a light unto the Gentiles and to anyone else who can stand him. But he is an artist only in a secondary capacity, and then always in spite of himself.

A great novel should no doubt say something. But what it says need hardly be more than the author's peculiar subjective response to life, presented with a vividness made possible by his gifts as an artist. If he goes much beyond spontaneous subjective expression, he is soon caught up in the didactic tentacles which threaten to stifle his art, and which are fatal if they succeed in twisting and squeezing the narrative and characters to fit the greedy doctrine behind them. The idea should always flow from the tale, never the tale from the idea. And when it does the former, it is no longer didactic in the ordinary sense, but (to become lyrical) more like a dim parable mumured through the mists of sunrise for the few ears that lie awake. How few! . . . The rest of men dream, imagine they have heard thunder, and swear it is a rousing and great book. The sales go up, the author gets his royalties. But as he pockets them, he sighs over the irony of the writer's lot.

It may have been unwise to introduce the word "subjective". Better to have stuck to "peculiar", "spontaneous", or "personal". Great wars have opened up around the subjective-objective problem, for which Einstein and Eddington must take some of the blame. There is a prospect that we shall all end up by being uncertain which side we're fighting on. Already the respective protagonists find that their definitions of the two terms overlap so subtly and trespass so fraternally that the combatants are in mortal danger of having nothing to quarrel about. A way of preventing this unnatural peace, or perhaps of throwing cold water over everybody, is to suggest that the whole discussion is meaningless, at any rate on the level of real values. For fundamentally, the idea of objectivity is as unthinkable as the notion of freewill. Even God, if he exists, is not objective. He is lamentably subjective (though why lament about it?—this is mere fashion). Any deity, if he exists as a coherent entity even in the widest sense, must have a particular nature, whether man claims to have any appreciable knowledge of that nature or not. But things particular are things limited, and that which is limited is biased and thereby subjective.

Even a preference for good over evil is a bias in the strict philosophical sense, amounting to a brake on true freedom of perception. The only really objective phenomenon is the universe in its totality.

On the level of God this comment on the fallacy of objectivity may seem a trifle up in the clouds—to make a facile play on words—but on the human level it soon shows itself something more substantial and by no means an intellectual quibble. No need to dwell on the now commonplace reality that the objectivity of every scientist is limited by his own imperfect sensory apparatus and mechanical tools; and also, it turns out, by the intrusion of the fourth dimension which makes everything in some infernal sense relative. Of more interest is the example of the most objective man who ever applied himself to the literature of fiction—Gustave Flaubert.

By way of preface to his case, a conspicuous delusion of scientists should first be put in its place. Since their profession demands more objectivity than others, scientists imagine they can accordingly surpass other men in the objective faculty in other fields. To the layman, however, it is plain that once outside their special sphere scientists are just as prejudiced, subjective, and romantic as anybody else, and often more so than other men of equivalent intellectual standing (if one is allowed to suggest that other men can attain to an equivalent intellectual standing). It is a complementary fact that certain men who profess no particular interest in science are yet effectively scientific-minded, in the basic sense that they make the analytical and objective approach to practically everything their minds touch—far more consistently than many scientists do. Such a man was Gustave Flaubert; and he had the distinction of being a consummate artist into the bargain, not only in terms of pure literary talent but by temperament also.

What was the effect of this objective outlook on Flaubert's work? What does it feel like to read him? For some, at any rate, the answer is paradoxical. It feels in the long run like getting acquainted with a new kind of subjectivism.

For although Flaubert's novels are marked by a notorious detachment and self-withdrawal from the narrative, or, rather, precisely *because* of this withdrawal, his books are saturated with the Flaubertian spirit. For this *was* his spirit, his personality: that of objective detachment and heroic self-effacement in the name of his art. All the way through his tales we can hear him saying, "The author in his work ought to be like God in the universe, present everywhere but visible nowhere". In *Salammbo* especially, the author's invisibility, his dispassionate impartiality in the face of violent conflict and emotion, before revolting evil and frenzied romantic passion, his pitiless fairness and God-like calm through it all—all this is so original and foreign to the hearts of mere men that it seems by its very triumphant inhumanity to be a new species of human idiosyncrasy, yet one more example of touching personal subjectivism. Once again, the postulate of objectivity is false. Unless, of course, we assume that Flaubert was the only man who saw the truth about men, and that the rest of us are baffled by the fierce revelation.

But he did not believe this himself. He was supremely tolerant of other artists and other people's aesthetic canons. "Art is what one can make it; we are not free. Each follows his own path in spite of his own desires." This seems to be a tacit acknowledgment of primal subjectivity of us all. Out of the horse's mouth, too.

If there is no objective truth, then—What is Truth? This inveterate question has implied itself a dozen times in the last few paragraphs. The familiar way out is to write yet one more book about it, rounding off the final sentence with still another question mark. But we might do better to take refuge in a significant saying of Aldous Huxley's: "The world is to a great extent illusory . . . it is none the less essential to improve the illusion."

We see then, that scientists who aspire to conquer the art of the novel by the shining sword of objectivity are embarked on a battle royal without duly weighing their choice of weapons. In the first place, objectivity is found to be a relative quantity like everything else. Secondly, in so far as it can be opposed to subjectivity, it is only in a limited sense that it can tell us more about men and life than its rival. Thirdly, Flaubert has already tried it. And he did so without being a man of scientific training—unless we allow a period spent as a medical student, an experience shared by a number of writers, great and small.

It is noteworthy that Flaubert's many imitators and self-imagined imitators, from Zola downwards, seem to have failed largely in proportion as they have had more aptitude and devoted more labour than Flaubert to the business of pure scientific study. Probably we are up against incompatibles in human nature. The faculty for revealing, amassing, and manipulating precise facts in logical form, and the particular inhibited relationship with life which this scientific preoccupation involves, is incompatible with the world of sensibility and aesthetics in which an artist is bound to live and work. Scientists may be romantic—generally are, perhaps. But their emotional life, sometimes intense in one or two directions, is almost invariably small in range, decidedly cramped by an artist's standards. Men of science have little instinctive interest in human nature, few lightning sensibilities and gifts of insight into character, no love of the uncharted bowels of things as a lively drama and intoxicating experience. The scientist knows men and the world in their denotary, not their connotatory aspect. If he stirs himself to study his fellows it is only as a sentimentalist or a psychologist that he gets in touch with them effectively; banal crises and poignant episodes touch his heart, but the same cardiac muscle can also freeze into a stone tablet coldly announcing the categories and classifications of *homo sapiens*. Or, more often, he shows one faculty or the other, not both, being either Sir Oliver Lodge or Professor Pavlov. If he turns philosopher he is always the moralist, whereas the artist in his true self is always the aesthete, whatever his outward protests.

It may be true (in spite of Aldous Huxley's brave marriage with ultimate illusion) that scientists and artists both search for reality and truth, and in consequence many cheerful things have been said about

their common goal and shared destiny. But the reality and truth they seek happen to be so dissimilar, and their equipment for searching so contrasted, that they fly their flags at the planetary poles quite as often as they join banners at the equator; and even then the odds are that they only meet because they have both caught the distant strains of a favourite Beethoven symphony. For music is the great bridge that spans the capricious oceans dividing science from art. Notwithstanding, this bridge may easily collapse if both travellers unwarily combine their weight at the centre in an attempt to pass over to the mysterious other side.

All this is to generalize and over-simplify. Pure scientists and pure artists are the exception not the rule, as with other brands of men. Most people are hybrids. But acquaintance with the thoroughbred stock is important to anyone who wants to understand the everyday mongrels. A little of the mongrel in the blood is, of course, all to the good. The untarnished aristocrat of science or art is probably too specialized to be a fit member of any civilized society.

On the other hand, harking back to the original topic of these notes, there are very definite limits as to how much of a scientist's make-up an artist can safely embody in his character. The examples of men like Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, and Aldous Huxley are useful here, as showing what happens when a novelist has a solid aptitude for scientific training and study.

It would appear, above all, that these writers show a universal deficiency in that very quality which first makes a novelist great—a fervid preoccupation, blindly and for its own sake, with the hearts and doings of men. What they like is not men, but ideas. They are outstanding writers, but not great novelists. Except in the earliest tales of Wells and Huxley (which are widely acknowledged to be their best artistically) we never come across a character without ideas to blurt out, or without being put there to have ideas blurted out about him by other characters or directly by the author himself. Every character has some strategic part to play in connection with the "uplifting" or "enlightening" them of the book. Aldous Huxley in particular, as Kenneth Allott has pointed out, is incapable (when he writes, at any rate) of taking an interest in a character whose ideas are not interesting; or, he might have added, unless his ideas are absurd, in which case he becomes the butt of Huxley's annihilating satire. To a greater or lesser extent, the players in these scientific novelists' works are all mouthpieces for their authors' propaganda, marionettes in an organized drama. Happily, the puppets sometimes get out of control, and the irrepressible fire of the artist is seen in some riotous digression for which the author is afterwards puritanically ashamed.

True to form, as with advancing years these scientific novelists become more of philosophers, so they become more of moralists. Though the morals of Wells, always a trifle unstable like the rest of him, latterly became somewhat utilitarian and pragmatic, to say the least of it. But to develop into the moralist in any commonly understood form is to turn one's back on art. Nor does this expunge the theory that on a higher level the aesthetic outlook of the artist

may make him the ultimate moralist, provided we accept a rather finer definition of the term "moralist".

Summing up, then, it would seem time to acknowledge that the scientist in his own element, despite a little self-congratulation now and again about "searching for truth", "worshipping at the altar of knowledge", and "forging progress" (the public must be placated, after all) in reality goes about his work for the love of it, because he is excruciatingly intrigued by certain fields of research and experiment; because, in a word, it is his vocation. The artist does . . . because he is fascinated by men and life as an aesthetic spectacle and personal pilgrimage on their own merits. The movements of a pig's legs are enough to absorb him to the point of rapture.

But when a scientist or artist attempt to meddle with each other's work, we can depend on it they are busy with broad-minded and self-conscious motives, instead of bowing to their native *daimon*. They are, in short, straining destiny and vulgarizing life; and probably permitting themselves delusions of grandeur into the bargain.

A Saint in History—Peter Wells

The edge of forest
Against primeval fires
Burning in caves: the savage songs
Rise like a scent in the evening:
Underfoot, frost weaving its white corals in the ground:
The hunter rides, over the snow, without a sound.

Withdraw a moment: consider:
The flash came from the left
The smoke, like a puff from a cigarette,
Drifts down on the wind: behind
That boulder: Look out!

The hunter in his ermine cloak
Beholds the stag, beautiful and golden.
On his knees in snow, he whispers
Prayers the trees answer with their branches.
Sun and stars circle and the mirrors of frost
Cast the starlight like statues in the dark waste.

Blow your fingers, man. Keep warm.
Fire. Down!
You've hit for sure. It's gone.

Before their caves the burning men leap,
Their bodies dance a song
Wolves howl; brands glow
And melt the fragile erections of snow.
Long after, in the darkness
Sparks leap and the stars slip
Over the horizon: the whole world is frozen.

Roy Fuller

Arnold's Poetic Object

For a short time, after Oxford, Arnold returned to Rugby to teach. But in 1849, when at twenty-seven he published his first book of poems, he was private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, President of the Council in Lord John Russell's Whig administration.

The main theme of the volume of 1849 is, appropriately, the position and rôle of the poet in the real world. In two of the most interesting poems ('The Strayed Reveller' and 'Resignation') the theme is explicit, and many others, by dealing with current ideas and events, show Arnold's preoccupation with the *zeitgeist*.

'The Strayed Reveller' is, in its limited way, one of the best and most perfect poems of the Victorian era. Written in dramatic form, the characters are a peasant youth, Circe and Ulysses, and the scene the portico of Circe's palace at evening. The poem opens by the youth saying:

> Faster, faster,
> O Circe, Goddess,
> Let the bright procession
> Of eddying forms,
> Sweep through my soul!

Circe asks him where he comes from, and he describes how he descended from the mountains at dawn, found her palace empty, drank her wine from the altar and slept. She gives him more wine and he sleeps again. Circe then calls Ulysses from the palace and he admires the youth's beauty. The youth wakes and guesses Ulysses' identity. Ulysses, because of the youth's sweet voice, asks him if he is the follower of some 'divine bard'. The whole poem up to this point consists merely of some 130 lines: the rest of it—more than as much again—is taken up by one speech from the youth. He describes six scenes which the happy Gods can see below them on the earth—Tiresias, for example:

> His robe drawn over
> His old, sightless head:
> Revolving inly
> The doom of Thebes.

or the Heroes:

> Sitting in the dark ship
> On the foamless, long-heaving
> Violet sea:
> At sunset nearing
> The Happy Islands.

Such things poets see also and celebrate—but with what labour and pain! They see Tiresias, but have also to bear his blindness, foreboding and age. They see the Heroes near harbour—but 'share their lives, and former violent toil'.

> —such a price
> The Gods exact for song;
> To become what we sing.

These things, says the youth, have been told him by Silenus. But he, the youth, has seen all day, drunk with Circe's wine, 'without pain, without labour', Maenads, Fauns and sometimes—Iaccus. He asks for more wine, and the poem ends with the same six lines which began it. Now their meaning is clear.

It is a remarkable poem to have appeared in 1849. As my quotations will already have shown, there is a literary precision in the imagery and a peculiar forcing of the particular into the general which one scarcely encounters again until Eliot and Pound:

> Clusters of lonely mounds
> Topp'd with rough-hewn,
> Grey, rain-blear'd statues.

and

> And peopled cities
> Inland, or built
> By the grey sea.

In one passage there is a catalogue of precious stones and things such as might have appeared in a poem of the nineties. And, of course, the free verse itself (which Arnold seems to have derived partly from Samson Agonistes, and partly—as he said—to create a similar impression to that produced by Greek choric poetry) looks forward to some of the Imagists.

The plot of the poem (like that of the later 'Empedocles on Etna') is so slight and so vaguely suggestive as almost to be a failure. It is really reading too much into the poem to make anything significant out of Circe or Ulysses or the wine. The setting is merely the setting for the contrast between ideal and reality, and to show the rôle of the poet as interpreter of both. And, subsidiarily, to show the powers of youth and to contrast youth with age (even Ulysses' age), an idea never far from Arnold's mind.

'Resignation', the poem which ends the 1849 volume, is one of those combining peripateticism and meditation which Wordsworth popularised. It is written in octosyllabic couplets and (like other poems in the book and the earlier 'Cromwell') contains some echoes of that poet. Addressing his sister, Arnold begins by saying, with a wealth of imagery, that those who propose a goal for themselves in life fear above all to find themselves back where they started, to have to renew the same struggles. He contrasts those people with 'milder natures' who can take life more easily. He then recalls a time ten years ago when he and his sister made the same country journey that they are making to-day. The country is not changed nor, says his sister, are they. The gipsies they have just met have wandered since then, and will so wander aimlessly until they die. But the poet cannot live aimlessly. And, further, he must recognise power without envy, beauty without desire: look on the life of cities and not feel alone. And when the poet regards nature he sees, with tears, that general life unrolling, placid and continuous, 'whose secret is not joy but peace', the life which with 'his sad lucidity of soul' he craves. The world outlasts all man's emotions and also his death. Therefore do not blame those who do not find it necessary to experience love or power to find them vanity, and who live resigned to but independent

of fate. Such are you and I (Arnold says to his sister), and if the kind of life we lead seems disproportionate to the pain and pomp of the world, then we should remember that the forms of nature (which we see around us now) seem also rather to exist passively than to rejoice. And even could fate grant man's desire for action and a wider life, his lot would be no better because absorbed in action he forgets the 'something that infects the world'.

Though in the above paraphrase I have resolved (rather crudely) some of Arnold's ambiguities, I have left unresolved the main (there are several) ambiguity of the final lines—the 'something'. The word seems principally to pick up the Wordsworthian description of the forms of nature a few lines earlier:

> . . . the mute turf we tread,
> The solemn hills around us spread,
> This stream that falls incessantly,
> The strange-scrawl'd rocks, the lonely sky . . .

But besides this implication of pantheistic meaning and purpose there is surely a pessimistic residue of meaning (the word 'infect' is significant) which can only refer to the world of events in which Arnold was living. 'In these bad days,' he says in a sonnet in the same volume, and in another he praises nature for labouring in tranquillity, while man's 'senseless uproar' mingles with his toil.

Although the young Arnold was able, as a man, to look remarkably fairly and acutely at the social world of his time,* as a poet he felt his age to be highly unpropitious. 'Reflect too,' he wrote to Arthur Hugh Clough in 1849, 'as I cannot but do here more and more, in spite of all the nonsense some people talk, how deeply *unpoetical* the age and all one's surroundings are. Not unprofound, not ungrand, not unmoving:—but unpoetical.' And again: 'these are damned times—everything is against one—the height to which knowledge is come, the spread of luxury, our physical enervation, the absence of great *natures,* the unavoidable contact with millions of small ones, newspapers, cities, light profligate friends, moral desperadoes like Carlyle, our own selves, and the sickening consciousness of our difficulties.'

Arnold's profound realisation of the antagonism between poetry and his age had a number of results. He tried, as no other poet of his time tried, to incorporate the age into his poetry, for he was conscious that the greater the antagonism the more vital was a reconciliation. There is a striking passage in a letter to Clough of 1852, in which he contrasts the poetry of a 'mature' and that of a 'youthful' world. Keats and Shelley, he says, were on the wrong track when they went back to the 'youthful' Elizabethans. What is wanted in this 'mature' age is not 'exquisite bits and pieces' but 'a complete magister vitae'. Poetry must include, as the poetry of the ancients did, religion, and

*On the 7th March, 1848, he wrote this, for example, to his mother:
"Certainly, taken individually, the French people, no more than one's own, are up to the measure of the ideal citizen they seem to propose to themselves . . . but the question to be tried is whether the proclamation of this ideal city and public recognition of it may not bring a nation nearer to that measure than the professedly unbelieving Governments hitherto for some time in force everywhere."

not leave religious wants to be supplied by Christianity. And poetry, with such an immense task to perform, must be 'very plain direct and severe'. This is surely one of the first consciously expressed wishes of the bourgeois poet not only to draw together the suture that industrial civilization had made in art, but also for an art which would transcend bourgeois art as it had previously been known.

How was the age to be incorporated, the poetry of a mature world written? Not with poems like 'Resignation'. 'More and more, Arnold wrote to his sister in 1849, 'I feel bent against the modern English habit (too much encouraged by Wordsworth) of using poetry as a channel for thinking aloud, instead of making anything'.* Nor must poetry 'lose itself in parts and episodes and ornamental work, but must press forwards to the whole'. (Letter to Clough). It is these considerations which account for the form of the 'The Strayed Reveller'—the meticulous selection of a myth to embody an idea, and its meticulous treatment—and for other poems in the 1849 volume, like 'Mycerinus' (truly, as Mr. Lionel Trilling has pointed out 'a sharp, succinct expression of the religious problem as it struck the men of (Arnold's) time'), or 'The Sick King in Bokhara', and for the succession of later poems, like 'Empedocles on Etna', 'Balder Dead', 'Tristram and Iseult' and 'Merope'.

But side by side with these ambitious poems went tnose which Arnold did not wish to write, the 'Resignations' as it were—'A Summer Night', 'The Scholar Gipsy', 'Dover Beach', and so on. "I am glad you like the 'Gipsy Scholar'," he wrote to Clough in 1853, "—but what does it *do* for you? Homer *animates*—Shakespeare *animates*—in its poor way I think Sohrab and Rustum *animates*—the 'Gipsy Scholar' at best awakens a pleasing melancholy. But this is not what we want."

Arnold wished to write of his world as though he were an integral part of it, and his most elaborate poems are attempts to give the world life without interposing the personality and attitude of the poet. It was not entirely accidental that the strain of these attempts coincided with the strain which Arnold felt after he had, in 1853, left Lord Lansdowne and (in order to marry and make his way in the world) become an Inspector of Schools, of writing poetry at all. His letters of the fifties are full of the hard, dull job to which he had condemned himself, and his difficulties in writing, among distractions and in bits, poems which really demanded continuous and concentrated attention. After the supreme effort (and failure) of 'Merope', Arnold gave up the battle. In his last book of poems there are no set-pieces—only lyrics in which life is seen through the gloomy eyes of the isolated artist:

> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.

and he can even mock at his old aim:

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*Unpublished Letters of Matthew Arnold. Edited by Arnold Whitridge. My other quotations from Arnold's correspondence are either from the well-known two volume edition, or the almost equally well-known edition of his letters to Clough.

Poet, what ails thee, then?
Say, why so mute?
Forth with thy praising voice!
Forth with thy flute!
Loiterer! why sittest thou
Sunk in thy dream?
Tempts not the bright new age?
Shines not its stream?
Look, ah, what genius.
Art, science, wit!
Soldiers like Caesar,
Statesmen like Pitt!
Sculptors like Phidias,
Raphaels in shoals,
Poets like Shakespeare—
Beautiful souls!

In a fine passage in 'Tristram and Iseult', Arnold describes precisely the process which brought his end as a poet. It is not sorrow or suffering, he says, that

shuts up eye and ear
To all which has delighted them before,
And lets us be what we were once no more.

It is

the gradual furnace of the world,
In whose hot air our spirits are upcurl'd
Until they crumble, or else grow like steel—*
Which kills in us the bloom, the youth, the spring—
Which leaves the fierce necessity to feel,
But takes away the power . . .

Because this process, Arnold's *désordre des ennuis* (Arnold himself quotes Senancour's phrase in his essay on *Obermann*), is shown most clearly in his shorter, personal poems, they are the ones which are likely to be read to-day. But it is omitting too much of Arnold not to recognise the effort (and achievement) represented by his longer pieces. Nor, unless we look at his work as a whole, do we appreciate the attempt which it makes, not only to represent the 'main movement of mind' (as Arnold said) of its period, but at literary criticism. Tennyson, as well as Keats and Shelley, Arnold felt strongly to be a harmful influence on the verse of his time. 'What perplexity Keats Tennyson *et id genus omne* must occasion to young writers,' he remarked to Clough. 'Yes, and those d——d Elizabethan poets generally.' Often in his letters he expresses the fear of unconsciously writing like Tennyson, whom he characterised as 'thoroughly and intensely *provincial*'. His concern about the *way* to write poetry even led him cruelly to criticise Clough (at the time he was intimate with him): 'I have been at Oxford these last two days and hearing Sellar and the rest of that clique who know neither life nor themselves rave about your poem (Clough's *Bothie*) gave me a strong, almost bitter feeling with respect to them, the age, the poem, even you. Yes, I said to myself, something tells me I can, if needs be, at last dispense with them all, even with him: better that, than be sucked for an hour even into the Time Stream in which they and he plunge and bellow. I became calm in spirit, but uncompromising, almost stern. More English than European, I said finally, more American than English: and took up

*Once again (we saw it in *Resignation*) Arnold contrasts the poetic with the executive type with always the underlying desire to be the latter not the former (a typical reaction, needless to say, of the bourgeois artist).

Obermann, and refuged myself with him in his forest against your Zeit Geist'. These are the words of a not entirely unpriggish young man, but they show with what fine Rugbeian scruples Arnold set out to write poetry: this sort of criticism is not heard again until Mr. Eliot. Arnold's attitude, in fact, was not that of a great poet but of a great critic—and was bound to end in sterility and disappointment. His verse has all the faults and virtues of a critic's verse.

I have spoken of the free verse of 'The Strayed Reveller'. Arnold's only other technical innovation, I think, is the development of this verse which he used in poems like 'Heine's Grave' and 'Rugby Chapel'—an irregular, dactylic, mainly three-beat, unrhymed line, admirably suited to the elegaic use to which he put it:

> 'HENRI HEINE'—'tis here!
> The black tombstone, the name
> Carved there—no more! and the smooth,
> Swarded alleys, the limes
> Touch'd with yellow by hot
> Summer, but under them still
> In September's bright afternoon
> Shadow, and verdure, and cool!
> Trim Montmatre! the faint
> Murmur of Paris outside;
> Crisp everlasting-flowers,
> Yellow and black on the graves . . .

In this verse, whose movement is intellectual rather than rhythmic, Arnold is perhaps most at home. No doubt his suspicion of Keats and Tennyson was helped by the fact that he is lacking in these poets' verbal and prosodic talent (though, on the other hand, some of his roughness is deliberately anti-Tennysonian). It is significant that the poem in which he partially succumbed to Tennyson's enormous influence (which in the forties and fifties of last century must have been as compelling as Auden's in the thirties of this), 'Sohrab and Rustom', is, despite its famous 'perfection', to my mind the most unsatisfactory of his longer poems.

But Arnold's most striking critical act as a poet was the deliberation in his choice of style and theme, and nowhere in his work is this more striking than in 'Merope' (1858). The highly conscious process of its composition is set out frankly and clearly in its preface. 'I have long had the strongest desire to attempt, for my own satisfaction, to come to closer quarters with the form which produces such good effects in the hands of the Greek masters . . . to try . . . how much of the effectiveness of the Greek poetical forms I could retain in an English poem constructed under the conditions of those forms'. He thought at first that he might achieve his object by translating a play of Aeschylus or Sophocles, but for several reasons rejected the idea. Should he, he then considered, choose a subject which had already been treated by one of the great Greek poets? This, also, he decided against. 'It remained to select a subject from among those which has been considered to possess the true requisites of good tragic subjects'. He then goes on critically to discuss, in a masterly way, the sources of the story of Merope and how the story had been treated by writers in modern times—to show, for one thing, how the version

of the story which he himself used was the most effective of several variations. The preface ends with the kind of apology about his work which Arnold made (and not perfunctorily) several times— a regret that many better poets of his time should not be doing with greater success what he is trying to do. 'Only their silence could have emboldened to undertake it one with inadequate time, inadequate knowledge, and a talent, alas! still more inadequate'.

The story which Arnold chose is this. Aepytus is the son of Merope and Cresphontes, sent away by Merope in his infancy to protect him from Polyphontes who for political reasons murdered his father. The action starts with the return of Aepytus incognito to Messenia, where Polyphontes is now king. Polyphontes is trying to persuade Merope to marry him. Aepytus, for the purposes of his plot to avenge his father's death, gives Polyhontes a false report of his own (Aepytus') death. Suspicion of murdering himself falls on Aepytus in his disguised rôle, and Merope (who does not recognise him) is about to kill him when his identity is revealed to her. They fall into each other's arms. Aepytus then kills Polyphontes, and assumes the kingship of Messenia.

The main point in which Arnold alters the traditional story is that instead of making Merope already the wife of Polyphontes on Aepytus' return, he shows her as the rebuffer of Polyphontes' offers of marriage. 'It revolts our feeling,' he explained in the preface, 'to consider her as married to her husband's murderer.' Arnold was already growing to be very touchy on matters of sexual morality, but even so it is astonishing that he should have rejected the opportunity of treating the pregnant Hamletesque theme which the original legend offered him.

Indeed, the legend as a whole takes on in Arnold's hands a blurred outline not dissimilar to the flattering unfocus which Tennyson gave to the Arthurian legend. It was precisely the 'grand effect' of the Greek—the naked truth and terror of life—which the morality of his time forbade Arnold to produce. Before reaching such effect even Dickens and George Eliot, the Victorian masters of the interpretation of human existence, call a halt.

Polyphontes, in Arnold's version becomes an ambiguous Liberal statesman; his murder of Cresphontes bad means to a good end—a pattern repeated in his own murder by Aepytus. Merope is the sensitive, high-minded, Victorian dame, whose interference in events is always attended by misfortune and passes for tragedy—Meredith drew her many times. Aepytus is the usual colourless young man of action of the Victorian novel. It is no wonder that Arnold found the poets of his age unattracted to the themes which he thought they should have treated: when he himself comes to write the object lesson he is bound in chains just as heavy as theirs.

All the same, 'Merope' has distinction. It is written with excellent taste. (Often with too much taste: as Mr. Trilling has reminded us, one contemporary critic's unfriendly, but not unjust, comment on Merope's inadequate 'Ah! . . . ', axe in hand, at the moment of the revelation of her son's identity, was 'An Oxford woman, evidently'.)

Some of the choruses are very fine—particularly the two which begin:

O Son and Mother,
Whom the Gods o'ershadow,
In dangerous trial,
With certainty of flavour!
Did I then waver
(O woman's judgment!)
Misled by seeming
Success of crime?

Nor, in 'Merope', has Arnold entirely lost the gift for the significant precise placing of the significant word which distinguished 'The Strayed Traveller':

Where clear-flowing Ladon,
Most beautiful of waters,
Receives the river
Whose trout are vocal . . .

and

Tears cours'd, tears human,
Down those disfigur'd
Once human cheeks.

And the drama is not less interesting because it shows some of Arnold's political ideas—on tyrants, on the 'people', on political expediency.

But I have written of 'Merope' (and 'The Strayed Reveller') not mainly to call attention to the part of Arnold's work which is somewhat neglected, but to show him grappling with the problem of writing the long poem—of writing adaquate poetry at all—so long ago: contemporarily, in fact, with some of the most unperturbed of our poets. The motives which led Arnold to compose 'Merope'—an accomplished imitation with no tradition and no future in English literature—are exactly those which lead and have led to the writing of ambitious poems in our own times.

He comprehended his poetic situation in his very first volume, but the compensations which he found in 'Resignation'—the illusory compensations of the placid and continuous 'general life' (in nature or of humanity), of the poet as sympathetic observer (illusory because founded on the weaknesses of the artist's position in bourgeois society and a false view of that society)—he discarded gradually during his short poetic career. The final volume, the *New Poems* of 1867* puts the situation in its starkest, most pessimistic form. He is, he says (in a startling modern way) in 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse' (which was published in *Fraser's Magazine* twelve years earlier):

Wandering between two wolds, one dead
The other powerless to be born.

And in 'Obermann Once More', although there is a vision of a more satisfactory future, he expresses the same predicament, the frustrating

*On mentioning this book I cannot forbear pointing out the new socially realistic note which, again presaging the future of poetry, enters—very tentatively indeed—into the two curious poems called 'East London' and 'West London'. They begin respectively:

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green

and

Crouch'd on the pavement close by Belgrave Square
A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied.

sense of the transitional state of the age which has overpowered so many poets since Arnold.

> But now the past is out of date,
> The future not yet born—
> And who can be *alone* elate,
> While the world lies forlorn?

'A Nameless Epitaph' and 'The Last Word' are Housmanesque in their curt weariness.

Arnold's elaborate search for myth was finally unsuccessful. Unlike Wordsworth, he found in his writing no satisfactory substitute for action, or in nature no 'something' which could provide a common ground between himself and his audience. Between Wordsworth and Arnold is the difference of being post-1789 and post-1848: Arnold was the first of the post-revolutionary poets who gained nothing from the revolution.

SOME SPANISH PAINTINGS

The paintings reproduced in this issue of *NOW* are among those shown at the exhibition of works by Spanish painters in Paris which took place during April at the Anglo-French Art Centre, St. John's Wood.

We give below short biographical notes of the painters whose work we have reproduced:

Oscar Dominguez. Born in Teneriffe 35 years ago. He came to Paris in 1927, and has worked with the surrealists there since 1936. He has held exhibitions in Paris at the Carre Gallery in 1943 and at the Roux-Haenschel Gallery in 1945. At the beginning of the war he was interned in a camp at Marseilles, similar to that described by Koestler in *The Scum of the Earth,* but he contrived to escape from there.

Manuel Adzuara. Born at Lerida, 27 years ago, of half Catalan and half gipsy extraction. He fought during the Spanish war against Franco, and then took refuge in France, where he was persecuted by the Gestapo. He has been painting for the last four years, and has collaborated with the Surrealist magazine *Main à plume.*

Louis Fernandez. Has been working for many years in France, and helped Picasso with the backgrounds for *Guernica.* In 1929 he started a painting of a bone and a loaf of bread, on which he has worked every day since, without finishing it. He has also made some beautiful erotic drawings which cannot be exhibited under present circumstances.

It is unnecessary to say anything about Picasso, except that, while we make no excuses whatever for his recent ideological failings, his revolutionary influence on modern painting is undeniable and must be acknowledged.

The exhibition also contains work by Antoni Clave, Pedro Flores, Jose Palmeiro, Ginez Parra, Joaquin Peinado, Javier Vilato, Francisco Bores and Hernando Vines.

We wish to thank the Anglo-French Art Centre for their assistance, and Mr. J. Bomford for permission to reproduce the painting by Picasso.

GUITAR HANGING ON A WALL by PABLO PICASSO.

DESIGN by FERNANDEZ.

BALCONY by DOMINGUEZ.

PORT by MANUEL.

Mary Harris

The Warehouse

The warehouse that stood beside the wharf was a great oblong building of dirty yellow brick reminiscent of public lavatories. Its ugliness was appropriate to a neighbourhood notorious as the darkest part of one of the worst towns in the country. Inside, the warehouse was divided into large rooms on either hand with a long, straight corridor down the middle. This pattern was repeated on every floor. It was a wholesale grocery business where hundreds of crates were opened in a week and dozens of hams boiled. Bill counted himself lucky to have been taken on here, for jobs were scarce at that time. Queues of men passed through the manager's office daily for him to stamp their papers to show that they really had tried to get work so that they could continue drawing the dole. But Bill had landed a job, and he was the more surprised because, apart from the foreman, an old man almost in his dotage, the place was staffed entirely by boys and girls of from sixteen to eighteen years old. They did not have to be paid as men and women. But it was obvious from the way they behaved that they were men and women; in so far as these consist of adult animals. The foreman had no control over them at all and it was a wonder that they ever worked. It was only their fear of the manager that forced them to it. He did not treat them as reasonable beings, as indeed they were not. He did not even treat them as beasts capable of reason, and so the potentiality which must have lain in them somewhere was never realized. Perhaps it was because Bill offered such a contrast to them that the manager took him on. It must have been a relief to have a thoughtful, intelligent man apply to him at all. Not that the manager realized how much superior Bill was to the others, he did not have enough talk with him for that, but it was apparent that he was different. Or it may have been his appearance that appealed to the boss. All the local lads were skinny and round-shouldered, their features indeterminate, their dank hair falling over their eyes. What else was to be expected, given the conditions in which they lived? Bill walked like a god among them. He was tall and straight and his curly hair adorned his head like a golden crown. The manager was a very religious man. He was a pillar of the Methodist Chapel. He held himself unspotted from the world. He abhorred the sins of the flesh. So much so, indeed, that it is doubtful whether he even knew what they were. Finding it difficult never to look at a woman to lust after her, he made it a rule never to look at women at all. And so he gazed the more tenderly upon men. His innocence recognized no danger here. But whereas

the girls in this slum where he lived made shift with paint and artificial silk to make themselves more attractive than malnutrition and dirt had allowed nature to make them, the boys could do nothing to disguise their weediness, and so the manager's eyes rested on Bill with more pleasure than he himself realized.

You are not to think from this that Bill was a nancy-boy. Far from it. Everyone in the works soon became aware of this. He went from the manager's office to report to the foreman who stood supervising the boiling of the hams. Some of the workers were skimming the tops of the vats while others were peeling the outside rind off the hot fat. When they saw Bill coming a shout went up. Word went all over the building that a new man had been hired. Boys and girls together took upon them to imitate him, ignoring the foreman's feeble protests. The boys fell upon Bill and bore him to the ground and, while some held him down, others removed his trousers. Then the girls came with the pieces of fat ham they had skimmed from the vats and rubbed them all over his genitals. Shouting with laughter they left him lying half naked and went back slowly to their work throughout the warehouse. But if they desired to introduce themselves to him, so in his turn did he to them. When he rose from the floor, he looked at the crowd of grinning spectators and, choosing the two who laughed the loudest, took one in each hand and knocked their heads together. All of them recognized strength when they saw it, it was almost the only thing they did understand. It was established that Bill was no nancy-boy.

And so it came about that when the old foreman died, Bill was the obvious successor to him. Bill became the foreman in his stead. But although the old man had had twice as much money as he did, when Bill took his place he did not get a rise. This was an injustice that he felt very keenly, but jobs were not so easy to get that one could afford to throw one away. Instead, Bill felt himself justified in taking goods from the warehouse home with him. Thus he got his pay in kind instead of in cash. But he felt that the manager should not have treated him like that and he began to notice many such instances. He took an interest in the way the boss ran the warehouse and already he began to think he could do it better himself. He also began to get an insight into the manager's character. He was a kindly, affectionate man who should have been the indulgent father of many children, but, since his religious scruples set him apart from the world, he liked to think himself the father of the firm's employees. But unfortunately he was cursed not only with Calvinism, but also with something in his own nature that excluded him even more from fellowship with others and prevented him from expressing the love that he had towards them. He was convinced of his own worthlessness. He had no confidence in himself. He was desperately afraid of other people lest they should sneer at him behind his back. It was a cruel fate which had made him a master over men and women, and particularly over such as worked in this warehouse. His bodily functions, of which his religion taught him to be ashamed, were all the more abhorrent to him because they emphasized his inferiority. They proved him an animal as well as

a god. Those which he could ignore, he ignored. But to support life he had to eat. This was the greatest humiliation to him and he lived in terror lest anyone should see him masticating. When he took out his sandwiches at lunch-time each day, he first would lock the door of his office and draw the curtains. Naturally it did not take long for his subordinates to discover this idiosyncracy and no sooner was it discovered than exploited. First of all they stole the key. Then one after another would come into the office on bogus errands, just for the pleasure of seeing him bolt his mouthful and hide the food away in a drawer. With such delinquents as this, his fatherhood developed into policing. The more they lowered him in his own estimation, the more he bolstered up his dignity by repressing them. If they would not love and respect him, they should fear him. He would show them who was manager here. And certainly he had succeeded. He was feared—and despised and hated. Any work that was done in the warehouse was done for fear of him.

Bill saw all this and realized how unfitted the manager was for his responsibilities. He was astonished, too, at the manager's blindness, he who thought himself omniscient. One day, for instance, Bill was working with a girl called Nell. He opened crates of currants and poured them into a kind of sieve. It was her job to separate them with her fingers so that they would pass through the holes into a shute to the floor below. As Bill stood on one side of the great sieve and Nell on the other their hands busied among the currants, a boy called Len from another department came behind her and put his hands on her eyes. The girl guessed his name rightly, but did not look round, continuing all the time with her work. Then the boy let his hands travel down from her eyes over her body, but still her fingers went to and fro among the fruit and, except for a little flush and an occasional giggle, she took no notice of what he did. Soon his love-play impeded her movements and Bill had to shout to her to get on. "How can I?" she asked with a gesture of resignation; and at that moment the Manager came in. The couple jumped apart, but it was more than apparent in what way they had been occupied.

"What are you doing here?" the manager said to Len, "get back to your work or I shall dock some of your pay."

According to his custom he did not look at the girl. The manager had seen nothing at all. It is truly said that innocence is a sure shield. No sooner had the manager gone out again than Len came back, saying "Dog out for us, Bill," as he came. So Bill went into the door-way to the corridor to keep guard for them and he had alternate glances up the passage and into the room, where Len and Nell copulated against the wall. They did not seem to mind him as a witness, and Nell was eating a large slice of bread and jam.

This kind of thing went on every day and the manager was as ignorant of it as a babe unborn. Bill could not help picturing the warehouse under his own jurisdiction. He had no illusions about these folk with whom he worked, but he believed they would respond to the right sort of treatment. The manager had precisely the wrong combination of strength and weakness. Bill would have precisely the

right. He would encourage them to be full human beings, rational as well as animal. He would treat them as such and expect them to be such, but at the same time would keep a firm hand on their activities. He would allow no nonsense in working hours, he would double the output of their labour. They would respect him as a person, but they would know it was no use to try anything on. He would not be hated, but he would be boss.

The more he thought about it the more he was convinced. It was for the good of the firm, the employees, the manager himself, that he, Bill, should take his place in the warehouse.

So one morning he walked into the manager's office. Unintentionally he surprised him eating an apple. The manager swallowed hastily, almost choking himself, and put the apple in his pocket. Then he spoke sternly to Bill for coming in without knocking and enquired of him what he wanted.

"I've come to tell you what I think of you," said Bill. "I think you're totally unfitted to run this warehouse. You handle the men in quite the wrong way."

The golden-haired young man was only voicing the manager's own conviction. This might have made him doubly angry at the impertinence, but as it happened it did not affect him that way. Instead he began to justify himself.

"But I am like a father to my underlings," he said. "I regard them as a father regards his recalcitrant children."

"I know," said Bill, "what you say is true, but you are an arbitrary and dictatorial father. Moreover, there comes a time in every family, even though it be of gods, when it becomes necessary for the father to be succeeded by the son."

The manager recognized the truth of this. Had there not been a moment in his own career, he could not tell precisely when, at which he himself in his own estimation had been obliged to step into the shoes of his father, God? But the inevitability of this process did not make it more welcome. He told himself he was by no means old yet. There was a great deal more power left in him for government. He would not give up the sceptre yet.

"Yes," he said, "that time must come, but it is not yet for me."

There was something pathetic in his assertion, but Bill was too young to have any pity. Ruthlessly he returned to the attack.

"You have denied in yourself all the things that make for life. You have never known a woman, you have never allowed yourself enjoyment. You dare not even eat with pleasure. Old maids and monks make that concession at least to the senses, that food should become the substitute for other desires. But you, what have you experienced of the life of the body? Nothing. And because of your ignorance you do not recognize in those you govern the animal nature which they exploit to the full, though on its lowest level.

"And has your godhead increased by this renunciation? No, it has not. You are a good, kind man at bottom. If you had not ignored a part of your nature, these divine attributes might have flourished, but because you have refused the life that is in you, all your energies have

been wasted in the pursuit of power. You understand your potentialities and have compensated for it by becoming a tyrant. You had not the courage to beget real children and your substitute children hate and despise you. Yes, I know, they are afraid of you, too, they dare not rise and thrust you from your throne. They are too young and ignorant."

Bill had waited some time to say all this and now he was enjoying himself.

"But I am not afraid. I am your equal. Indeed I am your superior. That is why I intend to displace you. Go and get yourself experience before it is too late."

He had been prepared to have to throw the manager out, but now an extraordinary thing happened. The manager of his own accord leaned on the desk and pulled himself up. He took the keys of the safe from his drawer and handed them without a word to Bill. Then, taking the apple out of his pocket, he bit it and walked calmly out of the room. Bill went to the window and watched him go, down the street, chewing for all to see. When he had gone out of sight Bill left the window, and sat himself down in the manager's chair.

Journey Back—Harry Roskolenko

Desolate city, where tents and greenery
Merged the war into a Kodak sign;
Two years ago a white army came;
To-day the jungle weeps its rain.

Here, docks and shops, the tools of war
Rust in iron disarray;
Names, signs and roads are grass,
And no soldiers pass.

The airfields in angular lines
Bulge flowers from metal and coral roads.
A chapel, with a rotting crucifix
Is sentinel to the solstice.

Green, green, like all the pasts we know,
Colours the stabbed, violent eye.
No known resemblance directs the scene,
Of death in green.

Perhaps a letter, lost, or forgotten here,
When love and ships fled to an armistice
My own name from a ragged roster stares
At my flowering nightmares.

Finchhafen, New Guinea, Oct. 21, 1946.

Paul Mattick

Stalin, Trotsky & Lenin

(*I*)

The alleged purpose of Trotsky's biography of Stalin* is to show "how a personality of this sort was formed, and how it came to power by usurpation of the right to such an exceptional rôle (XI)."† The real purpose of the book, however, is to show why Trotsky lost the power position he temporarily occupied and why his rather than Stalin's name should follow Lenin's. Prior to Lenin's death it had always been "Lenin *and* Trotsky"; Stalin's name had invariably been near or at the end of any list of prominent Bolsheviks. On one occasion Lenin even suggested that he put his own signature second to Trotsky's. In brief, the book helps to explain why Trotsky was of the opinion "that he was the natural successor to Lenin" and in effect is a biography of both Stalin and Trotsky.

Because of the "gigantic factory of lies which was organized by the Kremlin", little is known of the character-forming early life of Stalin. But the falsifiers did not succeed completely. The basic warp of his narrative, Trotsky points out, "is made up of documents, memoirs, and other objective sources". He has not, he says, "overlooked a single fact, document, or bit of testimony redounding to the benefit of Stalin (XII)." He admits, of course, that some of his "objective sources" are not really objective, but he increases their objectivity by interpolating "one or another episode from his personal reminiscences". The "memoirs", on which he relies, are "undoubtedly prejudiced", as they are written by Mensheviks and other "enemies of the revolution". But Trotsky thinks he knows "how to find the kernel of truth" in these sources. What this kernel is may be seen from the following.

Out of Trotsky's book, Stalin emerges as a man in whose "spiritual life, the personal, practical aim always stood above the theoretical truth, and the will played an immeasurably greater part than the intellect" (19) The mainspring of his personality is "envy of all who are more gifted, more powerful, rank higher than he" (336). He measures "every situation, every political circumstance, every combination of people by one criterion—usefulness to himself, to his struggle for power, to his relentless itch for domination over others (386)."

By his "very nature", Trotsky relates, Stalin "had always been a person of little culture, an opportunist and double-dealer". He is lazy, crude, sly, cruel, choleric, rude, malevolent, sullen, sadistic, revengeful; a "sluggish thinker", "unendurably vulgar", with a "partiality for criminals". Indeed, a "very difficult person to get along with". Real revolutions upset him, because "his nature craves a centralized political machine" (358). He is no more than a "small time propagandist and organizer"; it took him much too long to get into the Central Committee of the Party and in the beginning he managed that only by way of the backdoor (202). He had always been regarded as a "second-

*Stalin. An appraisal of the man and his influence. Edited and translated from the Russian by Charles Malamuth. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1946. (516 pp.; $5.00).—The first seven chapters and the appendix, that is, the bulk of the book, Trotsky wrote and revised himself. The last four chapters, consisting of notes, excerpts, documents, and other raw materials, have been edited.

†The numbers in parentheses refer to pages in Trotsky's book.

rate figure" and had been looked upon as "a practico, *i.e.*, as a rank and file revolutionst, useful primarily for local organizational activity" (114).

Stalin is not only a sluggish thinker, he is "no thinker at all". He "cannot make head or tail of international matters", and simply does not "fit into any public activity". His "style of writing is bad", at times he is unable to write more than "two articles a month". He wrote only one book of importance and that was not his own. It was practically dictated to him by Lenin (157). Worst of all, perhaps, Stalin "is neither a marksman nor a hunter, in the sporting sense of the word. He has a general appearance which makes it easier to imagine him placing traps at night than firing a gun at a bird in flight" (172).

Not only to the general reader, but curiously enough to Trotsky himself, "Stalin's personal characterization or his political biography . . . have scarcely any significance" (21). But Trotsky, though he considers these questions "subsidiary", mixes main questions and subsidiary questions in such a manner that answers to the latter questions must also serve as answers to the former. Just as Lenin by virtue of his political and personal good qualities is made mainly, if not totally, responsible for the success of the October Revolution, so Stalin's bad personal and political qualities are seen as the chief reason for the particular ways in which the Revolution "degenerated". The great-man theory, veiled in pseudo-materialistic garb with respect to Lenin, becomes in Stalin's case a small-man theory, embellished with historical data so selected and interpreted as to allow Trotsky to pose as a Marxist historian.

To an unbiassed reader of this biography, that is, to a reader not so much concerned with Stalin and Trotsky as with the Russian Revolution, it soon becomes apparent that this particular book of Trotsky's belongs to the same mental and political climate that produced the Moscow Trials and that instigated the murder of Trotsky himself. In fact, the competition in proven and unproven accusations is really breathtaking, the climax in Trotsky's case being his strong suspicion that Stalin poisoned Gorki and Lenin in order to make more secure his dictatorial position.

The personal and moral characteristics of Stalin, true or untrue, are of little interest with respect to the history of Bolshevism. And of course it can only be the history of Bolshevism, not that of Stalin, with which the "Marxist" Trotsky must really be concerned in order to justify the writing of this book, particularly because Trotsky points out that Stalin "took possession of power, not with the aid of personal qualities, but with the aid of an impersonal machine. And it was not he who created the machine, but the machine that created him (XV)." Although it should follow from this that Trotsky's real interests should centre around the machine, his main concern is with Stalin's lack of personal qualities.

As far as the machine is concerned, Trotsky cannot help but defend it, being himself one of its creators. What he regrets is not the existence of the machine but the fact that it was not foolproof against political up-starts of the type of Stalin. That the political machine created by the Bolsheviks was incapable of doing other than serve the dictatorial rule of the Party and, within the Party, the absolutistic rule of its leaders, is of no real concern to Trotsky. Here, too, as in other respects, he holds that "it is not only a question of *what* is being done, but also *who does it* (408)."

This dictum of Trotsky's springs from necessity. His own past incorporates that type of policy which at a later date was given the derogatory name of Stalinism. All beginnings are small, of course, and the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky differs from present-day Stalinism just as Hitler's brown terror of 1933 differed from the Nazism of the Second World War. But Stalin's totalitarianism, at least in its organizational aspects, resulted from Lenin's and Trotsky's organizational and tactical innovations whch were dressed up as the "dictatorship of the Proletariat", and were executed by its vanguard, the Bolshevik party.

That there is nothing in the arsenal of Stalinism that cannot also be found in that of Lenin and Trotsky is attested to by the earlier writings of Trotsky himself.* For example Trotsky, like Stalin, introduced *compulsory*

*See, for instance, L. Trotsky's *Dictatorship vs. Democracy*, New York, 1922; particularly from page 135 to page 150.

labour service as a "socialist principle". He, too, was convinced "that not one serious socialist will begin to deny to the Labour State the right to lay its hands upon the worker who refuses to execute his labour power". It was Trotsky who hurried to stress the "socialistic character" of inequality, for, as he said, "those workers who do more for the general interest than others receive the right to a greater quantity of the social product than the lazy, the careless, and the disorganizers". It was his opinion that everything must be done to "assist the development of rivalry in the sphere of production"

Of course, all this was conceived as the "socialist principle" of the "transformation period". It was dictated by objective difficulties in the way of full socialization. There was not the desire but the need to strengthen party dictatorship until it led to the abolishment of even those freedoms of activity which, in one fashion or another, had been granted by the bourgeois state. However, Stalin, too, can offer the excuse of necessity, and does actually offer it when he distinguishes between "socialism" and "communism". And until the Stalinist "world revolution" has taken place and secured itself he, too, can speak of the process of transformation as justification for the harshness of dictatorship.

In order to find other arguments against Stalinism than his personal dislike for a competitor in intra-party struggles, Trotsky must discover and construct political differences between himself and Stalin and between Stalin and Lenin in order to support his assertion that without Stalin things would have been different in Russia and elsewhere. It will be necessary to pay some attention to these "differences", the more so because for quite some time Trotsky prided himself on being the unacknowledged originator of many of Stalin's "successful" policies as, for instance, the launching of the first Five Year Plan.

Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin belonged to the Bolshevik Party; Trotsky, the late comer, entered the Party only after the February Revolution. All three, however, had been members of the Social Democratic Party before it split into Menshevik and Bolshevik. All were Marxists at a time when, as Trotsky writes, Marxism in Russia "was still passing through its intelligentsia stage" (15), a stage that "involved a kind of defence of the progressive mission of capitalism" (25) as against the *Populist* idea that Russia might escape the capitalist stage of development altogether. The whole revolutionary movement prior to 1905 was financed principally by the liberal bourgeoisie. And up to 1917 the "political machine of the Bolshevik Party was predominantly made up of the intelligentsia, which was petty-bourgeois in its origin and conditions of life and Marxist in its ideas" (203).

The peculiar social structure of the Party machine, regarded by Trotsky as one of the causes for the Party's later "degeneration", is at the same time recognized by him as a "historical necessity" because of the backwardness of the Russian masses. Lenin's principle of centralism, however, is for Trotsky not a source of Stalinism, although it, too, finds its explanation "in the lack of homogeneity and the backwardness of the toilers—that is, in the general social conditions which make imperative that very centripetal leadership of the class by its vanguard (61)." And Lenin's hierarchical system of professional revolutionists receives Trotsky's full approval. He defends it against all those who see in it a source of Stalinism. "A professional revolutionist is a person," he says, "who completely dedicates himself to the Labour movement under conditions of illegality and forced conspiracy . . . The young men and young women who devoted themselves entirely to the revolutionary movement without demanding anything in return were not the worst representatives of their generation . . . they cannot suffer by comparison with any other social group" (54).

Stalin, too, was a professional revolutionist. And if the professionals "demanded nothing in return" as *revolutionists*, they fought nevertheless for professional leadership over the whole of Russia and, if possible, the world. Their revolutionary goal would be reached with their transformation into government officials. This, as we already learned from Trotsky, is a "historical necessity", in view of the backwardness of the masses.

Trotsky's defence of Bolshevik principles is supposed to harmonize his anti-Stalinism with his Leninism. The organizations of Trotsky's "Fourth International" are all constructed in the Leninist manner, yet they are not

expected to suffer the fate of Stalin's party. There must then be a difference between Lenin and Stalin, but in spite of all Trotsky's efforts, it is not possible to find significant personal or political differences between the two. Aside from Trotsky's assertion that when he was near death Lenin fully recognised the dangerous character of Stalin and tried to oppose him, Stalin appears throughout the biography as the truest follower of the master. In fact, it is Lenin himself who pushes his prize pupil higher and higher in the party hierarchy.

If Trotsky "did not notice Stalin even among the second-rate members of the Central Committee of the Party" (242), nevertheless it was Lenin who put him there. "Greedily, Lenin seized upon the capable and energetic Stalin and helped to advance his candidacy at the Duma elections" (150). Lenin, Trotsky explains, was "advancing Stalin, that 'splendid Georgian' as he once called him, because of his enthusiasm for people who showed resoluteness, or were simply successful in carrying out an operation assigned to them", and "because he valued Stalin's firmness, grit, stubborness, and to a certain extent his slyness, as attributes necessary in the struggle" (243). It was particularly "the ability to 'exert pressure' which Lenin prized so highly in Stalin" (270). Of course, this was not a one-sided love affair; "on all the most important occasions Stalin insured himself by voting with Lenin" (228).

There could not have been any "theoretical" differences between Lenin and Stalin, as the only theoretical work bearing the name of the latter had been inspired and supervised by Lenin. And if, as we have learned, Stalin's "nature craved" the centralised party machine, it was Lenin who constructed the perfect machine for him, so that on that score, too, no differences could arise. In fact, as long as Lenin was active, Stalin was no trouble to him, however troublesome he may have been to "Number Two Bolshevik".

Still, in order for Trotsky to explain the "Soviet Thermidor", there must be a difference between Leninism and Stalinism, provided, of course, there was such a Thermidor. On this point, Trotsky has brought forth various ideas as to when it took place, but in his Stalin biography he ignores the question of time in favour of the simple statement that it had something to do with the "increasing privileges for the bureaucracy". However, this only brings us back to the early period of the Bolshevik dictatorship which found Lenin and Trotsky engaged in creating the state bureaucracy and increasing its efficiency by increasing its privileges.

If it is not possible to make Stalin responsible for the Russian bureaucracy, he might be made responsible for its "Stalinist" version. There have been great changes in Russia, but these changes do not suggest a definite distinction between Leninism and Stalinism. Frequent changes in governmental policy caused by internal and external circumstances have been accompanied by a changing composition of the bureaucracy. However, it would be false to consider *all* the intra-Russian bureaucratic struggles as reflections of deeper-rooted social upheavals caused either by internal or international difficulties. The main reason for these struggles is the bloody process of the formation and organization of a new ruling class in the developing system of state-capitalism. Of necessity the competing adversaries disguise their narrow goals, that is, their positions of power and privileges, with arguments of an apparently wider vision based on the remaining plurality of interests within Russian society and international power struggles.

(*To be continued*).

Book Reviews

by Julian Symons, Louis Adeane and Derek Stanford

THE LITTLE MAGAZINE.

I

A book on the history of the little magazine has been badly needed for a long while. The only work on the subject published in this country is Mr. Denys Val Baker's pamphlet, published by Allen & Unwin for the P.E.N. Club, which has an undefined approach to its subject. It is a pleasure to welcome from America a book compiled by two dons with the assistance of the Chief of the Periodicals Division of the New York Library—a book which, although it is marked by omissions and limitations, is still scholarly, intelligent, and in most respects remarkably comprehensive.*

The Little Magazine is a book of some four hundred odd pages, of which over a hundred and fifty are given to a vast bibliography of little magazines from 1891 until the present time. This bibliography contains details of over five hundred little magazines, including first and last publication dates, editorial details, and information regarding special issues. Very often it contains also a brief description of editoral intentons, and of the chief contributors to the magazine. For instance, readers of *Now* will be interested to find:

> "The magazine *Now* has had an interesting publishing history. It first appeared in 1940 as a 'cyclo-styled sheet', at that time an effort to continue the tradition of some British magazines (*New Verse* and *Twentieth Century Verse*) which had been forced to suspend with the outbreak of World War II. In 1943 the name *Now* was attached to what its editor calls a 'series of volumes of literary and social writings . . . So far as their social content is concerned, the volumes of *Now* will be edited from an anarchist viewpoint', says its editor, George Woodcock." Etc., etc.

The information contained in these summaries is generally remarkably accurate, and the bibliography will be indispensible to any student of the little magazine . The few errors and omissions are of little importance, and Miss Ulrich (who is responsible for the bibliography) has recorded details of every little magazine of any importance published since 1914.

The earlier part of the book is less satisfactory. The first thing the authors of a book like this need to do is to define what they mean by a "little magazine." Lack of such definition wrecked Mr. Denys Val Baker's pamphlet from the start—nothing else could have prompted the inclusion of *The Cornhill, Blackwood's*, and other respectable periodicals which have nothing to do with little magazines. The definition of our authors is:

> "A little magazine is a magazine designed to print artistic work which for reasons of commercial expediency is not acceptable to the money-minded periodicals or presses."

This statement is accompanied by several intelligent qualifications which make it fairly acceptable—certainly it is difficult to think of a better definition. But it says nothing about the reason for the existence of little magazines, their significance as a symptom in the body of society and art; and it rigidly limits little magazines to those concerned with writing which is *technically* avant-

*THE LITTLE MAGAZINE. A History and a Bibliography by FREDERICK J. HOFFMAN, CHARLES ALLEN and CAROLYN F. ULRICH (Princeton University Press, $3.75).

garde—dadaist, surrealist. etc. Thus, the authors lay it down as a rule that such magazines "will appeal only to a limited group, generally not more than a thousand persons." But *Our Time*—to take an instance which comes immediately to mind—has a circulation of well over ten thousand copies. Yet it seems to me that *Our Time* is certainly a little magazine.

The most interesting question about little magazines, as I have already suggested, is: what conditions gave them birth? This question is barely touched by the authors. They launch, instead, upon an exhaustive examination of some magazines better known to American than to English readers, under such chapter headings as " 'Poetry' and 'Others'." "The Little Review," "Regionalism and the the Little Magazine," "Political Directions in the Literature of the Thirties." It is necessary, I think, to raise an eyebrow at the treatment which considers *The Little Review* and *Hound and Horn* in great detail, but only mentions casually *The Criterion;* which gives a chapter to "Modern Poetry and the Little Magazine" without mentioning *New Verse*; which discusses at length the history of such interesting American periodicals as *Broom* and *Secession,* while relegating the equally interesting English *Wheels* and *Art and Letters* to bibliographical mention. Difficulties of communication are no doubht partly responsible for this lack of balance: but still it is impossible for an English reader not to murmur "The *American* little magazine, I think," after reading the chapters in which the authors trace painstakingly the course of some very minor names in American literary history.

A sense of proportion, indeed, is lacking in this book. Its authors are not literary critics; they have little perception of the differences between magazines that genuinely expressed the ideas of a talented individual or group, and those that simply copied current fashion or were designed to establish their editor in a certain social or literary position. They have included an estimate of much American material that is of little historical or literary value, and they have omitted any estimate of much English material that is of great interest . . .

But here one is perhaps being ungracious towards a work which announces itself as a history, and not a criticism. Let me correct this ungraciousness by saying that *The Little Magazine* is an admirable piece of historical research, and lays a firm basis for a serious critical work on its subject.

II

The "little magazine", as it has existed since about 1910 in the U.S.A. and 1914 (the year of *Blast's* appearance) in England, is the expression of a minority culture working in a literary society quite plainly in process of disintegration. *The Little Review* ("making no compromise with the public taste") and *Blast* showed the contempt for majority culture which was the outward expression of their contributors' awareness of a deep cleavage between what was popular and what was valuable in art. In their first few years of life little magazines expressed these ideas violently (like *Blast* and *The Little Review*) or with various degrees of hesitation and gentility (like *The Chapbook* and *Art and Letters*).

The rapid collapse of the standard of popular writing in the last thirty years, the development of book publishing as a commercial racket, the organization of publishing around best-seller and library sales (all of these tendencies existed in the late nineteenth century, but in much more moderate forms) encouraged the little magazine's intransigence; the Russian Revolution and its echoes in other countries turned the thoughts of some editors towards social realism and those of others towards a remote and exaggerated aestheticism.

The first group of editors, whose cultural ideas were orientated around the central pole of coming social revolution, gave their backing generally to an art which Wyndham Lewis summarised in a phrase as that of the "revolutionary simpleton". In practice, they regarded art to-day as a social weapon, while they paid tribute to the extra-military qualities possessed by much great art of the past. Their rude Philistinism was matched by the frantic, although not always acknowledged, aestheticism of the second group of editors, who propounded not social revolution but "the revolution of the word", and endeavoured in such magazines as *Broom* and *Transition* to solve the technical, while ignoring the social problems of literature.

Between these two extremes, and aware of them both, moved the magazines which made the most valuable contributions to literature and ideas: *The*

Criterion, The Calendar of Modern Letters, New Verse, Hound and Horn, The Fugitive, Partisan Review. But a characteristic of almost all these periodicals, even those which were most highly tendentious, or which proposed the most ridiculous solutions of social and literary problems, was that their contributors showed a regard for some kind of standard of values. Editors of and contributors to little magazines have been often egotistical, foolish and vain; they have often followed gaudy novelties:

> He had championed Epstein. Gertrude, Joyce and Coward
> And even now was nothing of a die-hard.

But it is their saving virtue that they have not been lured by the warm smell of the bitch Success, that they have been moved by the innocent vanity of wishing to see their name on the spine of a book rather than the more treacherous desire to sell a million copies of it. They have preserved, in an odd way, and in a disgusting time, what one calls rather reluctantly, the values of literature. That is the reason why one respects, and reads, little magazines.

The key, perhaps, is pitched a little high. It is certainly true that although many of the best English-writing prose-writers, and almost all of the best poets, of our time have been introduced through little magazines, several novelists have succumbed to the temptation of writing down to a best-seller level. One should not claim any monopoly of virtue for little-magazine contributors—the point made here is that the peculiar conditions of writing in our age have made the little magazines a natural outlet for intelligence and idealism. It is a more important observation that one seems, in using these fine words about little magazines, to be writing almost wholly of the past.

The advance of cultural kitsch has not spared the little magazine. In America the proprietors of *Time* proposed to start a kind of monster little magazine—one which should have some of *Time's* financial resources at its back as a recompense for feeling *Time's* guiding hand at its elbow. In England avant-garde writing has been canalised into the smooth dullish near-academic waters of *Horizon* and *New Writing* and *Orion*—periodicals that have no need to worry about a compromise with public taste because their taste *is* largely that of the semi-educated public at which they aim, periodicals that sell their several thousands of copies where once little magazines sold their several hundreds. Such periodicals have their virtues, which have been stressed often elsewhere: but they are in some sort the vulgarisers of literature. They are careful not to offend, nor to make themselves ludicrous, by rash experiment: their sponsors, rebels once, have a stake in the social-literary world of their time.

The little magazine has seen, I think, its best days. As kitsch advances further in our society, as it offers more and greater rewards to the young writer of promise—"Wouldn't you like to write a film script for Mr. Rank?" "There are some nice *cultured* jobs in the B.B.C."—the little magazines will be less and less able to attract talent. Some will participate enthusiastically in the advance of kitsch, by popularising difficult authors and artists and making compromise after compromise in the cause of good taste and wide readership; others will preserve the little magazine's typical intransigence. It is not very likely, however, that the little magazine will sponsor any more Hemingways or Faulkners or Eliots. And that is in some ways a pity, because a talent at work in writing a film script is (in our society) much more limited than the same talent at work in writing a poem. But it is useless to weep: the little magazines were merely a bright and transient facet in a decaying culture: our problem for to-day and to-morrow is not to induce young writers to send their manuscripts to the little magazines, but to find out ways and conditions, other than those ways provided more and more directly by monopoly capitalism, in which their talents can be used at all.

JULIAN SYMONS.

BETWEEN MAN AND MAN. Martin Buber. (Kegan Paul, 12/6.)

Before considering the present book, it might be useful to distinguish Martin Buber from other mystics and philosophers and to define his position among them.

On the stream of exile springing from the Russian revolution came many representatives of the Eastern Orthodox Church, carrying with them the ideas of

certain of those lay thinkers—Dostoevsky, Solovyev, Khomyakov in this case—whose work the Church has always found it politic to absorb. East encountered West; the Universal Church gleamed almost into memory; a regeneration took place and by a pleasing irony one result of the revolution was seen to be a revival of its most forceful enemy, Rome. The strength of the revival may be measured by its comparative tolerance: the attitude (though stiffened by Thomism) of M. Maritain, the charity shown to Protestantism in the shape of the German Confessional Church (Niemoller; Karl Barth), and the novels of Mauriac and Graham Greene. A further and much happier irony was the spreading into Europe of certain non-Catholic and semi-libertarian ideas, represented most powerfully, on a philosophic level, by the work of Nicolas Berdyaev. Berdyaev refers to his own "anarchist tendencies, of a particular sort", and indeed many aspects of Personalism may be identified with what is usually called "philosophic anarchism". Some of these anarchist tendencies in Berdyaev are shared by Martin Buber, who as a German Jew and a Zionist, is also a refugee from totalitarianism and reflects that experience in his work. Apart from Karl Heim and Friedrich Gogarten, whose work is satellite to Buber's, Berdyaev is probably closest to him in the philosophic firmament.

The reaction from collectivism may produce a merely individualist philosophy. Thus (M. Sartre's Hamlet raising a ghostly Heidegger), Existentialism descends by almost direct parentage from Husserl and Kierkegaard. Buber however, may be said to have reacted against Kierkegaard and in many ways is in complete opposition to him. How opposite may be gauged from the remark quoted by Buber from Feuerbach: "Man's being is contained only in community, in the unity of man with man—a unity which rests, however, only on the reality of the difference between I and Thou." This remark, says Buber, gave his thought a decisive impetus, and it seems to have carried him a long way from the world-rejection of Kierkegaard, the world-solicitude of Heidegger, or the death-in-life of M. Sartre.

The present book may best be approached by a resumé of Buber's views as set out in *I and Thou*, his most important work. In *Between Man and Man* Buber says: "I have given up the 'religious' which is nothing but the exception, extraction, exaltation, ecstasy; or it has given me up. I possess nothing but the everyday out of which I am never taken." This remark is qualified later, but perhaps it supplies some justification for concentrating on those elements in his thought that have a specific relevance to anarchist theory. Buber's view is that man's attitude to life is two-fold, as expressed in the "primary words" *I—It* and *I—Thou*. The *I—It* relationship is that existing between man and things. In so far as a man, a tree, or an idea can be treated as a thing; analysed, classified, socialised, considered partially by the senses or the intellect, caught up into a net of temporal or conventional forces: to the degree it is a thing and only an *I—It* relationship with it can be possible. The *I* of the *I—It* relation is different from the *I* of the *I—Thou* relation. The *I—Thou* relation is compared by Buber to a dialogue, in which the *Thou* represents, ultimately, God. To all men and things may be said the word Thou, and the I is bound as in dialogue to the Thou, indeed there is no I except insofar as it enters this relation and moves within the *I—Thou*. Man is not real if he is isolated. "All real living is meeting," says Buber, and: "The man who knows a world is man *with* man." "Relation is mutual", but this does not mean that dialogue is the same as love; nor is it identification with the Other, passion, knowledge, belief, solicitude or experience. Rather the *I—Thou* relationship may be compared with Levy-Bruhl's *participation mystique* and when Buber says "In the beginning was relation" he refers to this primitive state: in theological imagery, the time before the Fall. In the beginning was the Word. "The present arises only by virtue of the fact that the *Thou* becomes present": the eternal present of dialogue contains that original Word. "If I face a human being as my *Thou*, and say the primary word *I—Thou* to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things. This human being is not the *He* or *She*, bounded from every other *He* and *She*, a specific point and time within the net of the world; nor is he a nature able to be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. But with no neighbour, and whole in himself, he is *Thou* and fills the heavens." In his new work Buber says: "Economics, the abode of the will to profit, and State, the abode of the

Murderer". This short work may be described as a fantasy-tract in the name of peace, a solipsist's argument against war, a "Death of a Hero" in essay form. Certainly Miller as Dada pacifist has very little deep or original to tell. Richard Aldington has already said it once, and all that Miller succeeds in doing is to get more raucous with the loud pedal down. Even exclamation-marks can't altogether supersede logic.

If I have dwelt at length on Miller, it is because he remains the key to Alfred Perlès and Wrey Gardiner, both of whom he has influenced. The former of these two, the blurb explains, "is a Czech who was born an Austrian subject, lived in Paris, and wrote in French, came to England just before the war and is now a distinguished writer in English". To console himself for this rootlessness, he studies Steiner's theosophy, and in lieu of local and national ties he develops 'cosmic' sympathies. Like Miller, he also does not believe in art, and though he professes anarchism, he thinks its advent is still light years away. Contemptuous of democracy, he offers no stop-gap politic but tells us his own personal solution lies in "creative escapism" (another term, one would have thought, for art). "There is," he writes, "little virtue in it, but the alternative would be insanity." "There is only one thing we can do to bring about the better world: to wait for it." At least, from his place in the atom-queue, he continues to write with glibness and charm—which is more than Elijah Miller achieves.

Like the previous authors, Wrey Gardiner favours a First Person Singular method of approach. Indeed, his book is more 'strictly confidential' in subject-matter than the other three.

The theme of "The Dark Thorn" is a year in the life of a poet; a long interior monologue taking journal form; a kind of breathless non-stop diary; a day by day accounting of the flux of time in a prose packed full of pell-mell impressions.

Of these four authors, Wrey Gardiner is nearest to accepting the ideal of the Ivory Tower; and his antinomian status is largely the product of an anti-commercial front in letters combined with an implicit defence of free-love.

"The world," wrote Schopenhauser, "is my representation"; but along with Henry Miller, Wrey Gardiner goes further, and when the American boldly maintains that "in this life I am God" he echoes "Like God I create my own world". Yet in spite of this inflamed imaginative boast these one-man deities feel their limitation. "We labour," writes Wrey Gardiner, "in difficulty, struggle against the indifference of a mad world." And again, he admits that art is something which stands in need of happinesss and freedom. The Ivory Tower needs its own militia. There are contradictions here which this book has not as yet successfully resolved.

In many ways the American short-storyist Paul Goodman is the most interesting of these authors; certainly the most complex of the four. The source of his independent vision seems to lie in his self-awareness, his self-conscious sense of being a Jew; and in a sketch entitled "The Canoeist" this feeling of apart-ness approaches the psycho-pathic, and is further complicated by Goodman being a pro- and anti-Semite in one.

Remodelling the myths of Jonah, and Nestor, of Orpheus, and Azazel's scape-goat, he creates a precariously mannered kind of prose which troubles the reader like a chevaux-de-frise. There is something of the moralist about Paul Goodman; a didactic aphorist disguised as Harlequin. He is a sort of contemporary Firbank, a philosophic Firbank who knows his Freud.

So much, in brief, for these free-lance freedom-lovers, these four libertarian *franc-tireurs;* all of them perhaps a little confused, and like the wind "wasted in liberty".

DEREK STANFORD.

CORRECTION:

We regret that in the article *The Colours of Liberty* by André Breton in *NOW* No. 7: the following words were missed out between lines 18 and 19 on page 34: "*infernal grandeur. I shall never forget the sheer relaxation, the*".

The article in question was the translation of a fragment of Bréton's book *Arcane* 17, published by Brentano, New York and Paris, 1945.